

# DGuzik 14 2Chronicles

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# 1

Solomon son of David solidified his royal authority, for the LORD his God was with him and magnified him greatly.

Guzik - 2 Chronicles 1:1-17

## **2 Chronicles 1 - Solomon Seeks God**

A. Solomon meets God at Gibeon.

1. (1-4) Solomon brings the leaders of Israel to the tabernacle at Gibeon.

Now Solomon the son of David was strengthened in his kingdom, and the LORD his God *was* with him and exalted him exceedingly. And Solomon spoke to all Israel, to the captains of thousands and of hundreds, to the judges, and to every leader in all Israel, the heads of the fathers'

*houses*. Then Solomon, and all the assembly with him, went to the high place that *was* at Gibeon; for the tabernacle of meeting with God was there, which Moses the servant of the LORD had made in the wilderness. But David had brought up the ark of God from Kirjath Jearim to *the place* David had prepared for it, for he had pitched a tent for it at Jerusalem.

a. **Now Solomon the son of David was strengthened in his kingdom, and the**

**LORD his God was with him:** Solomon made a great start to his reign as king, and God blessed it. He had been left with almost every possible advantage by his father David and his kingdom was strong.

b. **Then Solomon . . . went to the high**

**place that was at Gibeon:** Solomon made these special sacrifices at **Gibeon** because **the tabernacle of meeting with God was there**.

Though the ark of the covenant had been brought to Jerusalem (**the place David had prepared for it**), the tabernacle itself stayed at Gibeon.

i. Morgan on the phrase, **tabernacle of**

**meeting:** "That is, it was the place where the people met with God. That is always the idea; not the meeting of the people with each other, but their meeting with God."

ii. We can track the progress of tabernacle and the ark of the covenant in the Promised Land:

- Joshua brought both the ark and the

tabernacle to Shiloh (Joshua 18)

- In the days of Eli the ark was captured and the tabernacle wrecked (1 Samuel 4, Psa. 78:60-64, Jer. 7:12 and 26:9)

- The ark came back to Kiriath-Jearim (1Sa. 7:1-2)

- Saul restored the tabernacle at Nob (1 Samuel 21)

- Saul moved the tabernacle to Gibeon (1Ch. 16:39-40)

- David brought the ark to Jerusalem and built a temporary tent for it (2Sa. 6:17, 2Ch. 1:4)

iii. There are several reasons to explain why David did not bring the tabernacle from Gibeon to Jerusalem.

- He may have believed if the tabernacle was there the people would be satisfied with that and they would lose the passion and vision for the temple God wanted built.

- It may be that the tabernacle was only moved when it was absolutely necessary - as when disaster came upon it at Shiloh or Nob.

- David simply focused on building the temple, not continuing the tabernacle.

2. (5-6) Solomon and the assembly seek God together.

Now the bronze altar that Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, had made, he put before the tabernacle of the LORD;

Solomon and the assembly sought Him *there*. And Solomon went up there to the bronze altar before the LORD, which *was* at the tabernacle of meeting, and offered a thousand burnt offerings on it.

a. **Now the bronze altar that Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, had made, he put before the tabernacle of the LORD:** This was the same altar made in the wilderness between Egypt and the Promised Land (Exo. 36:1-2). This altar was at least 500 years old and had received many sacrifices over Israel's long history since the Exodus.

b. **Solomon and the assembly sought Him there:** Solomon and the people of God **sought** the LORD *at the place of atoning sacrifice*. This was the Old Testament equivalent to "coming to the cross" in seeking God.

i. This was an important event marking the "ceremonial" beginning of Solomon's reign. Solomon wanted to demonstrate from the beginning that he would seek God and lead the kingdom to do so.

c. **And offered a thousand burnt offerings:** This almost grotesque amount of sacrifice demonstrated both Solomon's great wealth and his heart to use it to glorify God.

3. (7-10) Solomon's request.

On that night God appeared to Solomon, and said to him, "Ask! What shall I give you?" And Solomon said to God: "You have shown great mercy to David my father, and have made me king in his place. Now, O LORD God, let Your promise to David my father be established, for You have made me king over a people like the dust of the earth in multitude. Now give me wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people; for who can judge this great people of Yours?"

a. **God appeared to Solomon:** 1Ki. 3:5 tells us that this remarkable visitation from God happened *in a dream*. This was one of the more significant dreams in the Bible.

i. "It is interesting to note that notwithstanding the fact that the ark was not there, God met with Solomon and communed with him." (Morgan) Here God made it clear that His presence was not to be superstitiously restricted to an association with the ark of the covenant.

b. **Ask! What shall I give you?** This was an amazing promise. God seemed to offer Solomon whatever he wanted. This wasn't only because Solomon sacrificed 1,000 animals. It was because his heart was surrendered to God, and God wanted to work something in Solomon through this offer and his response.

i. The natural reaction to reading this promise of God to Solomon is to wish we had such a promise. We do have them.

· *Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. (Mat. 7:7) · If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. (Joh. 15:7) · Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. (1Jo. 5:14)*

ii. "The problem for many Christians, then, is not whether they will receive anything when they ask, but whether they will ask at all." (Selman)

c. **You have shown great mercy:** Before responding to God's offer and asking for something, Solomon remembered God's

faithfulness to both David and now to Solomon himself.

d. **Now give me wisdom and knowledge:** Solomon asked for more than great **knowledge**; he wanted **wisdom**, and according to 1 Kings 3, he wanted it in his **heart**, not merely in his *head*.

e. **That I may go out and come in before**

**this people:** This was a Hebrew expression that meant, "That I may fulfill my duties before this people." Solomon asked for the **knowledge** and **wisdom** necessary to be a good king.

i. "Such words referred originally to military leadership (1Ch. 11:2; cf. 1Sa. 18:13) but are here broadened into representing good governmental administratorship in general." (Payne)

B. God answers Solomon's request.

1. (11-12) Solomon receives wisdom and more from God.

And God said to Solomon: "Because this was in your heart, and you have not asked riches or wealth or honor or the life of your enemies, nor have you asked long life; but have asked wisdom and knowledge for yourself, that you may judge My people over whom I have made you king; wisdom and knowledge *are* granted to you; and I will give you riches and wealth and honor, such as none of the kings have had who *were* before you, nor shall any after you have the like."

a. **Because this was in your heart:** God was pleased by what Solomon *asked for*, in that he knew his great need for **knowledge** and **wisdom**. God was also pleased by what Solomon *did not ask for*, in that he did not ask for riches or fame or power for himself.

i. Solomon's request was *not* bad. We are specifically told in 1Ki. 3:10 that *the speech pleased the LORD*. Yet we can also ask if this was *the best* Solomon could ask for.

"Was this the highest gift that he could have asked or received? Surely the deep longings of his father for communion with God were yet better." (Maclaren)

ii. Solomon did his job well - as well or better than anyone. Yet as his falling away in the end showed (1Ki. 11:1-11) there was something lacking in his spiritual life. "There is no sign in his biography that he ever had the deep inward devotion of his father. After the poet-psalmist came the prosaic and keen-sighted shrewd man of

affairs." (Maclaren)

**b. Wisdom and knowledge are granted to you; and I will give you riches and wealth and honor:**

God not only answered Solomon's prayer, he answered it beyond all expectation.

Solomon did not ask for **riches and wealth and honor**, but God gave him those also.

i. "God's answer was a beautiful instance of the overflowing love and grace of the divine heart. All the things Solomon set aside for the sake of wisdom were also given to him." (Morgan)

ii. Appearing in his dream, God answered Solomon's prayer and made him wise, powerful, rich, and influential. His reign was glorious for Israel. At the same time, his end was tragic. We can fairly say that Solomon *wasted* these gifts God gave him. Though he accomplished much, he could have done much more - and his heart was led away from God in the end (1Ki. 11:4-11).

ii. "Instead of being the *wisest* of men, did he not become more *brutish* than any man?

Did he not even lose the *knowledge of his Creator*, and worship the abominations of the Moabites, Zidonians, and [so forth]? And was not such idolatry a proof of the *grossest stupidity*? How few proofs does his life give that the gracious purpose of God was fulfilled in him! He received *much*; but he would have received *much more*, had he been faithful to the grace given. No character in the sacred writings disappoints us more than the character of Solomon." (Clarke, commenting in 1 Kings) 2. (13-17) The great wealth of King Solomon.

So Solomon came to Jerusalem from the high place that *was* at Gibeon, from before the tabernacle of meeting, and reigned over Israel.

And Solomon gathered chariots and horsemen; he had one thousand four hundred chariots and twelve thousand

horsemen, whom he stationed in the chariot cities and with the king in Jerusalem.

Also the king made silver and gold as common in Jerusalem as stones, and he made cedars as abundant as the sycamores which *are* in the lowland. And Solomon had horses imported from Egypt and Keveh; the king's merchants bought them in Keveh at the *current* price. They also acquired and imported from Egypt a chariot for six hundred *shekels* of silver, and a horse for one hundred and fifty; thus, through their agents, they exported them to all the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Syria.

a. **So Solomon came to Jerusalem . . . and reigned over Israel:** Solomon actually reigned – or began his reign – in the great wisdom God gave him at Gibeon. A famous example of this wisdom is found in 1Ki. 3:16-28, where he wisely judged between two mothers who each claimed the same baby as their own.

b. **And Solomon gathered chariots and horsemen:** The famous stables of Solomon show what a vast cavalry he assembled for Israel. Unfortunately, it also shows that

Solomon did not take God's word as seriously as he should. In Deu. 17:16, God spoke specifically to the future kings of Israel: *But he shall not multiply horses for himself.*

c. **The king made silver and gold as common in Jerusalem as stones:** When we think of Solomon's great wealth, we also consider that he originally did not set his heart upon riches. He deliberately asked for wisdom to lead the people of God *instead* of riches or fame. God promised to *also* give Solomon riches and fame, and God fulfilled His promise.

i. We also consider that Solomon gave an eloquent testimony to the vanity of riches as the preacher in the Book of Ecclesiastes. He powerfully showed that there was no ultimate satisfaction through materialism.

We don't have to be as rich as Solomon to

learn the same lesson.

ii. Certainly, Solomon presided over a prosperous and wealthy kingdom. Yet the Chronicler is also warning us here. He assumes that we know of the instructions for future kings of Israel in Deu. 17:14-20. He assumes we know verse 17 of that passage, which says: *nor shall he greatly multiply silver and gold for himself*. God blessed Solomon with great riches, but Solomon allowed that blessing to turn into a danger because he disobediently multiplied silver and gold for himself.

iii. "There was nothing wrong in all this, but it created a very subtle peril. Prosperity is always a more insidious danger to men of faith than adversity." (Morgan)

**d. Solomon had horses imported from**

**Egypt and Keveh:** At the end of this great description of Solomon's wealth and splendor, we have the sound of this dark note. This was in direct disobedience to Deu. 17:16, which said to the Kings of Israel: *But he shall not multiply horses for himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses, for the LORD*

*has said to you, "You shall not return that way again."*

i. **Keveh** (also known as Cilicia) was "in what is now southern Turkey, at the east end of the Mediterranean, was a prime

ancient supplier of horses." (Payne)

**e. Thus, through their agents, they exported them to all the kings of the**

**Hittites and the kings of Syria:** This may explain why Solomon broke such an obvious commandment. Perhaps the importation of

horses from Egypt began as trading as an agent on behalf of other kings. From this, perhaps Solomon could say, "I'm importing horses from Egypt but I am not doing it for myself. I'm not breaking God's command." Many examples of gross disobedience begin as clever rationalizations.

i. It is hard to know in what order Solomon's compromise was expressed. Yet it is possible to say that this disobedience to this seemingly small command began the downfall of Solomon.

- *First*, in disobedience he multiplied horses for the service of his kingdom and he obtains them from the Egyptians (1Ki. 4:26, 10:28-29).

- *Then*, because of these connections with Egypt he married Pharaoh's daughter (1Ki. 3:1).

- *Then*, because he started by marrying an Egyptian he married many other foreign women (1Ki. 11:1-4).

- *Then*, because of the presence of the foreign wives he built temples to their gods for their use (1Ki. 11:7-8).

- *Then*, because of the presence of these temples he began to worship these other gods himself (1Ki. 11:4-5).

© 2006 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** Solomon addressed all Israel, including those who commanded units of a thousand and a hundred, the judges, and all the leaders of all Israel who were heads of families. **3** Solomon and the entire assembly went to the worship center in Gibeon, for the tent where they met God was located there, which Moses the LORD's servant had made in the wilderness. **4** (Now David had brought up the ark of God from Kiriath Jearim to the place he had prepared for it, for he had pitched a tent for it in Jerusalem. **5** But the bronze altar made by Bezalel son of Uri, son of Hur, was in front of the LORD's tabernacle.

Solomon and the entire assembly prayed to him there.) **6**

Solomon went up to the bronze altar before the LORD which was at the meeting tent, and he offered up a thousand burnt sacrifices.

**7** That night God appeared to Solomon and said to him, "Tell me what I should give you." **8** Solomon replied to God, "You demonstrated great loyalty to my father David and have made me king in his place. **9** Now, LORD God, may your promise to my father David be realized, for you have made

me king over a great nation as numerous as the dust of the earth. **10** Now give me wisdom and discernment so I can effectively lead this nation.

Otherwise no one is able to make judicial decisions for this great nation of yours.”

**11** God said to Solomon, “Because you desire this, and did not ask for riches, wealth, and honor, or for vengeance on your enemies, and because you did not ask for long life, but requested wisdom and discernment so you can make judicial decisions for my people over whom I have made you king, **12** you are granted wisdom and discernment. Furthermore I am giving you riches, wealth, and honor surpassing that of any king before or after you.”

**13** Solomon left the meeting tent at the worship center in Gibeon and went to Jerusalem, where he reigned over Israel.

**14** Solomon accumulated chariots and horses. He had 1,400 chariots and 12,000 horses. He kept them in assigned cities and in Jerusalem. **15** The king made silver and gold as plentiful in Jerusalem as stones; cedar was as plentiful as sycamore fig trees are in the lowlands. **16**

Solomon acquired his horses from Egypt and from Que; the king’s traders purchased them from Que. **17** They paid 600 silver pieces for each chariot from Egypt, and 150 silver pieces for each horse. They also sold chariots and horses to all the kings of the Hittites and to the kings of Syria.

**1** (1:18) Solomon ordered a temple to be built to honor the LORD, as well as a royal palace for himself.

Guzik - 2 Chronicles 2:1-18

***2 Chronicles 2 - Supplies and Workers for the***

# Temple

A. An overview of the work of building the temple.

1. (1) Solomon's determination to build the temple.

Then Solomon determined to build a temple for the name of the LORD, and a royal house for himself.

a. **Then Solomon determined to build a temple:** His determination was fitting because of all that his father David did to prepare for the building and because of the charge David gave him to do the work.

i. We might think that the greatest thing about Solomon was his wisdom, his riches, his proverbs or his writings. Clearly for the Chronicler the most important thing about Solomon was the temple he built. This was

most important because it was most relevant to a community of returning exiles who struggled to build a new temple and to make a place for Israel among the nations again.

ii. "Chronicles' record of Solomon's achievements moves straight away to the construction of the temple. Several important items in the account of his reign in Kings are left out as a result, such as his wisdom in action, administration, educational reforms, and some building activities ( e.g. 1Ki. 3:16-4:34; 7:1-12).

These were not unimportant, but, for Chronicles, they were all subsidiary to the temple." (Selman)

b. **And a royal house for himself:** Solomon's great building works did not end with temple.

He also built a spectacular palace (1Ki. 7:1-12) and more.

2. (2) The magnitude of the work

Solomon selected seventy thousand men to bear burdens, eighty thousand to quarry *stone* in the mountains, and three

thousand six hundred to oversee them.

a. **Seventy thousand men to bear burdens, eighty thousand to quarry stone:** This seems to describe the number of Canaanite slave laborers that Solomon used.

i. Ginzberg relates some of the legends surrounding the building of the temple.

"During the seven years it took to build the Temple, not a single workman died who was employed about it, nor even did a single one fall sick. And as the workmen were sound and robust from first to last, so the perfection of their tools remained unimpaired until the building stood complete. Thus the work suffered no sort of interruption." (Ginzberg)

b. **And three thousand six hundred to oversee them:** This was the middle management team administrating the work of building the temple.

i. "The number of *thirty-six hundred* foremen differs from 1Ki. 5:16 (3,300), but the LXX of Kings is quite insecure here, and Chronicles may preserve the better reading." (Selman)

B. Solomon's correspondence with Hiram king of Tyre.

1. (3-6) Solomon describes the work to Hiram.

Then Solomon sent to Hiram king of Tyre, saying: As you have dealt with David my father, and sent him cedars to build himself a house to dwell in, *so deal with me*. Behold, I am building a temple for the name of the LORD my God, to dedicate *it* to Him, to burn before Him sweet incense, for the continual showbread, for the burnt offerings morning and evening, on the Sabbaths, on the New Moons, and on the set feasts of the LORD

our God. This *is an ordinance* forever to Israel.

And the temple which I build *will be* great, for our God is greater than all gods. But who is able to build Him a temple, since heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him? Who *am* I then, that I should build Him a temple, except to burn sacrifice before Him?

a. **Solomon sent to Hiram king of Tyre, saying: As you have dealt with David my father:** Solomon appealed to Hiram based on his prior good relationship with his father David.

This shows us that David did not regard every neighbor nation as an enemy. David wisely built alliances and friendships with neighbor nations, and the benefit of this also came to Solomon.

i. "Hiram is an abbreviation of Ahiram which means 'Brother of Ram,' or 'My brother is exalted,' or 'Brother of the lofty one.' . . .

Archaeologists have discovered a royal sarcophagus in Byblos of Tyre dated about 1200 B.C. inscribed with the king's name, 'Ahiram.' Apparently it belonged to the man in this passage." (Dilday, commentary on 1 Kings)

b. **Then Solomon sent to Hiram:** "According to Josephus, copies of such a letter along with Hiram's reply were preserved in both Hebrew and Tyrian archives and were extant in his day ( *Antiquities*, 8.2.8)." (Dilday) c. **I am building a temple for the name of the LORD my God:** Of course, Solomon did not build a temple for a **name** but for a living God. This is a good example of avoiding direct mention of the name of God in Hebrew writing and speaking. They did this out of reverence to God.

i. Solomon also used this phrase because he wanted to explain that he didn't think the temple would be the house of God in the way pagans thought. This is especially shown in his words, **who is able to build Him a temple, since heaven and the**

# heaven of heavens cannot contain

**Him?** By the standards of the paganism of his day, Solomon's conception of God was both Biblical and high.

ii. "He never conceived it as a place to which God would be confined. He did expect, and he received, manifestations of the Presence of God in that house. Its chief value was that it afforded man a place in which he should offer incense; that is, the symbol of adoration, praise, worship, to God." (Morgan)

iii. God is, "good without quality, great without quantity, everlasting without time, present everywhere without place, containing all without extent . . . he is within all things, and contained of nothing: without all things, and sustained of nothing." (Trapp) 2. (7-10) Solomon's request to Hiram.

Therefore send me at once a man skillful to work in gold and silver, in bronze and iron, in purple and crimson and blue, who has skill to engrave with the skillful men who are with me in Judah and Jerusalem, whom David my father provided. Also send me cedar and cypress and algum logs from Lebanon, for I know that your servants have skill to cut timber in Lebanon; and indeed my servants *will be* with your servants, to prepare timber for me in abundance, for the temple which I am about to build *shall be* great and wonderful.

And indeed I will give to your servants, the woodsmen who cut timber, twenty thousand kors of ground wheat, twenty thousand kors of barley, twenty thousand baths of wine, and twenty

thousand baths of oil.

**a. Therefore send me at once a man**

**skillful to work in gold and silver:** Solomon wanted the temple to be the best it could be, so he used Gentile labor when it was better. This means that Solomon was willing to build this great temple to God with "Gentile" wood and using "Gentile" labor. This was a temple to the God of Israel, but it was not only for Israel.

i. "The leading craftsmen for the Tent, Bezalel and his assistant Oholiab, were both similarly skilled in a range of abilities ( *cf.*

Exo. 31:1-6; 35:30-36:2)." (Selman)

ii. "Despite a growing number of 'skilled craftsmen' in Israel, their techniques

remained inferior to those of their northern neighbors, as is demonstrated

archaeologically by less finely cut building stones and by the lower level of Israelite

culture in general." (Payne)

**b. To prepare timber for me in abundance:** The cedar trees of Lebanon were legendary for their excellent timber.

This means Solomon

wanted to build the temple out of the best materials possible.

i. "The Sidonians were noted as timber craftsmen in the ancient world, a fact

substantiated on the famous Palmero Stone.

Its inscription from 2200 B.C. tells us about timber-carrying ships that sailed from Byblos to Egypt about four hundred years

previously. The skill of the Sidonians was

expressed in their ability to pick the most suitable trees, know the right time to cut

them, fell them with care, and then properly treat the logs." (Dilday)

3. (11-16) Hiram's response to Solomon.

Then Hiram king of Tyre answered in writing, which he sent to Solomon: Because the LORD

loves His people, He has made you king over them. Hiram also said: Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel, who made heaven and earth, for He has given King David a wise son, endowed with prudence and understanding, who will build a temple for the LORD and a royal house for

himself! And now I have sent a skillful man, endowed with understanding, Hiram my master *craftsman* (the son of a woman of the daughters of Dan, and his father was a man of Tyre), skilled to work in gold and silver, bronze and iron, stone and wood, purple and blue, fine linen and crimson, and to make any engraving and to

accomplish any plan which may be given to him, with your skillful men and with the skillful men of my lord David your father. Now therefore, the wheat, the barley, the oil, and the wine which my lord has spoken of, let him send to his servants.

And we will cut wood from Lebanon, as much as you need; we will bring it to you in rafts by sea to Joppa, and you will carry it up to Jerusalem.

**a. Then Hiram king of Tyre answered in**

**writing:** "We find . . . that kings could *write* and *read* in what were called the by the proud and insolent *Greeks* and *Romans* barbarous nations. Nearly *two thousand* years after this we find a king on the British throne who could not sign his own name." (Clarke)

**b. Blessed be the LORD God of Israel:** We can't say if Hiram was a saved man, but he certainly respected the God of Israel. This was no doubt due to David's godly influence on Hiram.

**c. I have sent a skillful man, endowed with understanding, Hiram my master**

**craftsman:** King Hiram answered Solomon's request for a **skillful man** (2Ch. 2:7). **Hiram** had a Jewish mother and a

Gentile father.

d. **The wheat, the barley, the oil, and the wine which my lord has spoken of, let him send to his servants:**

Hiram agreed to work for the arrangement suggested by Solomon,

though he could have asked for more (1Ki. 5:6).

i. This shows us that Hiram did expect to be paid. His service and the service of His

people were not a gift or a sacrifice. "There are a good many people who get mixed up

with religious work, and talk as if it were very near their hearts, who have as sharp an eye to their own advantage as he had. The

man who serves God because he gets paid

for it, does not serve Him." (Maclaren) 4. (17-18) The laborers who built the temple.

Then Solomon numbered all the aliens who *were* in the land of Israel, after the census in which David his father had numbered them; and there were found to be one hundred and fifty-three thousand six hundred. And he made seventy thousand of them bearers of burdens, eighty thousand stonecutters in the mountain, and three thousand six hundred overseers to make the people work.

a. **All the aliens who were in the land of Israel:** This specifically tells us where the **seventy thousand** man labor force described here and in 1Ch. 2:2 came from.

i. "The temple, then, did not become a house of prayer for all nations by accident.

The nations even played a part in its construction!" (Selman)

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**2** (2:1) Solomon had 70,000 common laborers and 80,000 stonecutters in the hills, in addition to 3,600 supervisors.

**3** Solomon sent a message to King Hiram of Tyre: “Help me as you did my father David, when you sent him cedar logs for the construction of his palace. **4** Look, I am ready to build a temple to honor the LORD my God and to dedicate it to him in order to burn fragrant incense before him, to set out the bread that is regularly displayed, and to offer burnt sacrifices each morning and evening, and on Sabbaths, new moon festivals, and at other times appointed by the LORD our God. This is something Israel must do on a permanent basis. **5** I will build a great temple, for our God is greater than all gods. **6** Of course, who can really build a temple for him, since the sky and the highest heavens cannot contain him? Who am I that I should build him a temple! It will really be only a place to offer sacrifices before him.

**7** “Now send me a man who is skilled in working with gold, silver, bronze, and iron, as well as purple, crimson, and violet colored fabrics, and who knows how to engrave.

He will work with my skilled craftsmen here in Jerusalem and Judah, whom my father David provided. **8** Send me cedars, evergreens, and algum trees from Lebanon, for I know your servants are adept at cutting down trees in Lebanon. My servants will work with your servants **9** to supply me with large quantities of timber, for I am building a great, magnificent temple. **10** Look, I will pay your servants who cut the timber 20,000 kors of ground wheat, 20,000 kors of barley, 120,000 gallons of wine, and 120,000 gallons of olive oil.”

**11** King Hiram of Tyre sent this letter to Solomon:

“Because the LORD loves his people, he has made you their king.” **12** Hiram also said, “Worthy of praise is the LORD God of Israel, who made the sky and the earth! He has given David a wise son who has discernment and insight and will build a temple for the LORD, as well as a royal palace for himself. **13** Now I am sending you Hiram Abi, a skilled and capable man, **14** whose mother is a Danite and whose father is a Tyrian. He knows how to work with gold, silver, bronze,

iron, stones, and wood, as well as purple, violet, white, and crimson fabrics. He knows how to do all kinds of engraving and understands any design given to him. He will work with your skilled craftsmen and the skilled craftsmen of my lord David your father. **15** Now let my lord send to his servants the wheat, barley, olive oil, and wine he has promised; **16** we will get all the timber you need from Lebanon and bring it in raft-like bundles by sea to Joppa. You can then haul it on up to Jerusalem.”

**17** Solomon took a census of all the male resident foreigners in the land of Israel, after the census his father David had taken. There were 153,600 in all. **18** He designated 70,000 as common laborers, 80,000 as stonecutters in the hills, and 3,600 as supervisors to make sure the people completed the work.

**1** Solomon began building the LORD’s temple in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the LORD had appeared to his father David. This was the place that David prepared at the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.

Guzik - 2 Chronicles 3:1-17

### ***2 Chronicles 3 - The Building of the Temple***

A. Where and when the temple construction began.

1. (1) The location of the temple.

Now Solomon began to build the house of the LORD at Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where *the Lord* had appeared to his father David, at the place that David had prepared on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.

#### **a. Now Solomon began to build the house of the LORD at Jerusalem on Mount**

**Moriah:** This place had been previously identified as the **threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite**. Here it is specifically located as **Mount Moriah**. This was the same hill where Abraham offered Isaac (Gen. 22:2), and the same set of hills where Jesus would later die on the cross (Gen. 22:14).

i. "Where Isaac, as a type of Christ, bore the wood, obeyed his father, and should have

been sacrificed. Calvary, where our Saviour suffered, was either a part of this mount, or very near unto it." (Trapp)

b. **Began to build the house of the LORD:** This was when the actual construction began.

All David's prior plans and preparations

anticipated the actual beginning of the work.

One can plan and prepare endlessly and never begin to build, but Solomon **began to build the house of the LORD.**

2. (2) When the construction began.

And he began to build on the second *day* of the second month in the fourth year of his reign.

a. **On the second day of the second month in the fourth year of his reign:** This was probably in the year 967 B.C. Connecting this with 1Ki. 6:1, this marking point shows just how long Israel lived in the Promised Land without a temple. The tabernacle served the nation well for more than 400 years. The prompting to build them temple was more at the direction and will of God than out of absolute necessity.

b. **In the fourth year of his reign:** This doesn't mean that Solomon delayed his

obedience for four years. He probably started to organize the work right away. There is some evidence that it took three years to prepare timber from Lebanon for use in building. If Solomon began the construction of the temple in the **fourth year** of his reign, he probably started organizing the construction in the very first year of his reign.

B. A Description of the temple.

1. (3-7) The building in general.

This is the foundation which Solomon laid for building the house of God: The length *was* sixty cubits (by cubits according to the former

measure) and the width twenty cubits. And the vestibule that *was* in front of *the sanctuary* was twenty cubits long across the width of the house, and the height *was* one hundred and twenty. He overlaid the inside with pure gold. The larger room he paneled with cypress which he overlaid with fine gold, and he carved palm trees and chainwork on it. And he decorated the house with precious stones for beauty, and the gold *was* gold from Parvaim. He also overlaid the house; the beams and doorposts, its walls and doors; with gold; and he carved cherubim on the walls.

a. **For building the house of God:** This chapter will describe the building of the temple and its associated areas. There are four main structures described.

- The temple proper (**the foundation which Solomon laid**), divided into two rooms (the holy place and the most holy place).

- The vestibule or entrance hall on the east side of the temple proper (**the vestibule that was in front of the sanctuary**). It was thirty feet (10 meters) wide and fifteen feet (5 meters) deep, and the same height as the temple proper. "Its height measurement should read *twenty cubits high* (NIV, REB, NEB), as against a literal translation of MT, 'and its height 120'." (Selman)

- The three-storied side chambers (described in 1Ki. 6:5) which surrounded the temple proper on the north, south, and west sides.

- A large courtyard surrounding the whole structure (the *inner court* mentioned in 1Ki. 6:36).

b. **He decorated the house with precious stones for beauty:** This is one description among many that give us an idea of how beautiful the temple was and how Solomon

spared no expense in making it beautiful.

i. "The reference to 'precious stones' may suggest mosaics, inlaid in the floor." (Payne) c. **He carved cherubim on the walls**: This was after the pattern of the tabernacle, which had woven designs of cherubim on the inner covering. Therefore when one entered the temple they saw **cherubim** all around - as one would see in heaven (Psa. 80:1, Isa. 37:16, and Eze. 10:3). These angelic beings worship God perpetually in heaven.

i. One might say that we don't worship angels but we do worship *with* them.

## 2. (8-14) The **Most Holy Place**.

And he made the Most Holy Place. Its length was according to the width of the house, twenty cubits, and its width twenty cubits. He overlaid it with six hundred talents of fine gold. The weight of the nails *was* fifty shekels of gold; and he overlaid the upper area with gold. In the Most Holy Place he made two cherubim, fashioned by carving, and overlaid them with gold. The wings of the cherubim *were* twenty cubits in *overall* length: one wing *of the one cherub* *was* five cubits, touching the wall of the room, and the other wing *was* five cubits, touching the wing of the other cherub; *one* wing of the other cherub *was* five cubits, touching the wall of the room, and the other wing *also was* five cubits, touching the wing of the other cherub. The wings of these cherubim spanned twenty cubits overall. They stood on their feet, and they faced inward. And he made the veil of blue, purple, crimson, and fine linen, and wove cherubim into it.

### a. **And he made the Most Holy Place:**

Special attention was given to the Holy of Holies or Most Holy place. It was a 30-foot (10 meter) cube, completely overlaid with gold. It also had two large sculptures of cherubim (15-foot or 5 meters in height), which were overlaid with gold.

b. **He overlaid it with six hundred talents of fine gold:** There was gold everywhere in the temple, but especially in

### the **Most Holy Place**.

The walls were covered with gold (1Ki. 6:20-22), the floor was covered with gold (1Ki. 6:30) and gold was hammered into the carvings on the doors (1Ki. 6:32).

i. There was gold everywhere on the inside of the temple. "Such was Christ's inside (Col. 2:9); in his outside was no such desirable beauty (Isa. 53:2); so the Church's glory is inward (Psa. 44:13), in the hidden man of the heart (1Pe. 3:4)." (Trapp)

c. **Two cherubim, fashioned by carving, and overlaid them with gold:** These two large sculptures inside the Most Holy Place faced the entrance to this inner room, so as soon as the High Priest entered he saw these giant guardians of the presence of God facing him.

i. "If it were image work – cherubims were made like boys – yet this is no plea for Popish images; since they are flatly forbidden; and God made the law for us, not for himself." (Trapp)

d. **And he made the veil:** This was the important barrier separating the holy place from the **Most Holy Place**. Only one man once a year could go behind the veil and enter the **Most Holy Place**.

i. "To most Israelites, therefore, the temple was an unseen world. God had drawn near to them, but the way to him was hedged around with many restrictions." (Selman) ii. Spiritually speaking, in dying for our sins Jesus *with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption* (Heb. 9:12).

iii. In the temple, this veil was torn from top to bottom at the death of Jesus (Mat. 27:51), showing that through His death, there is no longer a barrier to the Most Holy place.

iv. Now the Most Holy Place is open to us:  
*brethren, having boldness to enter the  
Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which  
He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is His flesh*  
(Heb.

10:19-20). The torn veil of Mat. 27:51 also symbolizes the  
broken body of Jesus,  
through which we have access to the Most  
Holy Place.

3. (15-17) The pillars of the temple.

Also he made in front of the temple two pillars thirty-five  
cubits high, and the capital that *was* on the top of each of  
*them* was five cubits. He made wreaths of chainwork, as in  
the inner sanctuary, and put *them* on top of the pillars; and  
he made one hundred pomegranates, and put *them* on the  
wreaths of chainwork. Then he set up the pillars before the  
temple, one on the right hand and the other on the left; he  
called the name of the one on the right hand Jachin, and the  
name of the one on the left Boaz.

**a. In front of the temple two pillars thirty-five cubits  
high:** 1Ki. 7:15 tells us that these pillars were actually made  
of bronze. They were two very impressive adornments to the  
**front of the temple.**

**b. He called the name of the one on the  
right hand Jachin, and the name of the  
one on the left Boaz:** These two pillars were so impressive  
that they were actually given names. **Jachin** means *He shall  
establish* and **Boaz** means *in strength*.

i. Every time someone came to the house of  
the LORD in the days of Solomon they said,  
"Look! There is 'He Shall Establish.' And there is 'In Him Is  
Strength.'" It set them in the right frame of mind to worship  
the

LORD. When the crowds gathered at the  
morning and evening sacrifice to worship  
the LORD, the Levites led the people

standing in front of the temple with these two great, bronze pillars behind them. It was always before them: *He Shall Establish* and *In Him Is Strength*.

ii. One could say that the house of God itself was **Jachin** and **Boaz**. That temple was *established* by God, and built by the *strength* of God. Every time they looked at that temple, they knew that God liked to establish and strengthen things.

iii. The house of God was a place where people experienced what the pillars were all about. At that house, people were *established* in their relationship with God. At that house, people were given *strength* from the LORD. From this building, it should go out to the whole community: "Come here and get *established*. Come here and receive the *strength* of God."

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**2** He began building on the second day of the second month of the fourth year of his reign.

**3** Solomon laid the foundation for God's temple; its length (determined according to the old standard of measure) was 90 feet, and its width 30 feet. **4** The porch in front of the main hall was 30 feet long, corresponding to the width of the temple, and its height was 30 feet. He plated the inside with pure gold. **5** He paneled the main hall with boards made from evergreen trees and plated it with fine gold, decorated with palm trees and chains. **6** He decorated the temple with precious stones; the gold he used came from Parvaim. **7** He overlaid the temple's rafters, thresholds, walls and doors with gold; he carved decorative cherubim on the walls.

**8** He made the most holy place; its length was 30 feet, corresponding to the width of the temple, and its width 30 feet. He plated it with 600 talents of fine gold. **9** The gold nails weighed 50 shekels; he also plated the upper areas with gold. **10** In the most holy place he made two images of

cherubim and plated them with gold. **11** The combined wing span of the cherubs was 30 feet. One of the first cherub's wings was seven and one-half feet long and touched one wall of the temple; its other wing was also seven and one-half feet long and touched one of the second cherub's wings. **12** Likewise one of the second cherub's wings was seven and one-half feet long and touched the other wall of the temple; its other wing was also seven and one-half feet long and touched one of the first cherub's wings. **13** The combined wingspan of these cherubim was 30 feet. They stood upright, facing inward.

**14** He made the curtain out of violet, purple, crimson, and white fabrics, and embroidered on it decorative cherubim.

**15** In front of the temple he made two pillars which had a combined length of 52½ feet, with each having a plated capital seven and one-half feet high. **16** He made ornamental chains and put them on top of the pillars. He also made one hundred pomegranate-shaped ornaments and arranged them within the chains. **17** He set up the pillars in front of the temple, one on the right side and the other on the left. He named the one on the right Jachin, and the one on the left Boaz.

**1** He made a bronze altar, 30 feet long, 30 feet wide, and 15 feet high.

Guzik - 2 Chronicles 4:1-22

***2 Chronicles 4 - Furnishings for the Temple and***

# Its Court

A. The furnishings of the temple.

1. (1) The bronze altar.

Moreover he made a bronze altar: twenty cubits was its length, twenty cubits its width, and ten cubits its height.

a. **He made a bronze altar:** The idea behind the Hebrew word for **altar** is essentially,

"killing-place." This was the place of sacrifice, the center for worship and service for the priests and the people.

i. "Just as in the tabernacle, the altar was the first main object to be met as one entered the sanctuary court. It demonstrates that God may be approached only through sacrifices." (Payne)

ii. We also have an altar: *We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat* (Heb. 13:10). Our altar

- our "killing-place" - is the cross, where Jesus died for our sins and we follow by dying unto self and living for Jesus.

b. **Twenty cubits:** Essentially, this altar was large (about 30 feet or 10 meters square) and about twice as large as the altar originally built for the tabernacle (Exo. 27:1-2).

c. **Ten cubits its height:** The altar was raised significantly. The altar was set up high, "That all the people might see the burnt-offerings, and be immined of their sins and of their Saviour; for the ceremonial law was their gospel." (Trapp)

2. (2-6) The washing basins for the temple.

Then he made the Sea of cast *bronze*, ten cubits from one brim to the other; *it was* completely round. Its height *was* five cubits, and a line of thirty cubits measured its

circumference. And under it *was* the likeness of oxen encircling it all around, ten to a cubit, all the way around the Sea. The oxen *were* cast in two rows, when it was cast. It stood on twelve oxen: three looking toward the north, three looking toward the west, three looking toward the south, and three looking toward the east; the Sea *was set* upon them, and all their back parts *pointed* inward. It *was* a handbreadth thick; and its brim was shaped like the brim of a cup, *like* a lily blossom. It contained three thousand baths. He also made ten lavers, and put five on the right side and five on the left, to wash in them; such things as they offered for the burnt offering they would wash in them, but the Sea *was* for the priests to wash in.

a. **Then he made the Sea of cast bronze,**

**ten cubits from one brim to the other:** The huge laver was more than 15 feet (5 meters) across, and was used for the ceremonial

washings connected with the priests themselves.

i. "Priests who did not wash to make themselves clean would die (Exo. 30:20)." (Selman)

i. "It was used by priests for cleansing their hands and feet and perhaps also to supply water to the standing basins for the rinsing of offerings (2Ch. 4:10)." Poole believes that perhaps water came out of the bulls that formed the foundation of the Sea.

b. **It stood on twelve oxen:** This large pool of water was set upon sculptured **oxen**.

"Prefiguring, say some, the twelve apostles, who carried the water of life all the world over." (Trapp)

i. **It contained three thousand baths:**

"In 1Ki. 7:26, it is said to hold only *two thousand baths*. Since this book was written *after* the Babylonian captivity, it

is very possible that reference is here made to the Babylonian *bath*, which might have been *less* than the Jewish." (Clarke) c. **He also made ten lavers:** These additional basins were used for washing and cleaning the animal parts in the rituals of sacrifice.

3. (7) The lampstands, tables, and bowls.

And he made ten lampstands of gold according to their design, and set *them* in the temple, five on the right side and five on the left. He also made ten tables, and placed *them* in the temple, five on the right side and five on the left. And he made one hundred bowls of gold.

a. **And he made ten lampstands . . . He**

**also made ten tables:** The work of the temple required **lampstands** for light and **tables** to hold the *showbread*, the bread that represented the continual fellowship of Israel with God.

Notably, the old tabernacle had *one* lampstand and *one* table. The temple fittingly displayed a greater light and a greater dynamic of fellowship.

b. **And he made one hundred bowls of**

**gold:** "The 'sprinkling bowls' were not particularly associated with the tables by seem rather to have been used for collecting the blood of sacrifices, which was then sprinkled about the altar in the temple services of atonement." (Payne)

4. (9-10) The court of the temple.

Furthermore he made the court of the priests, and the great court and doors for the court; and he overlaid these doors with bronze. He set the Sea on the right side, toward the southeast.

a. **He made the court of the priests:** This was also known as the *inner* court, the court of the temple open only to the priests.

b. **And the great court:** This was the *outer* court, the place in the temple precincts open to the assembly of Israel as a

whole.

i. "Yet this very division into two courts (2Ki.

23:12) gave concrete expression to the fact that under the older testament there had not yet been achieved that universal priesthood of the believers that would come about through Jesus Christ. In him all the people of God have direct access to the

Father." (Payne)

B. The work of Hiram from Tyre.

1. (11-17) Hiram's furnishings for the temple.

Then Hiram made the pots and the shovels and the bowls. So Hiram finished doing the work that he was to do for King Solomon for the house of God: the two pillars and the bowl-shaped

capitals *that were* on top of the two pillars; the two networks covering the two bowl-shaped

capitals which *were* on top of the pillars; four hundred pomegranates for the two networks

(two rows of pomegranates for each network, to cover the two bowl-shaped capitals that *were* on the pillars); he also made carts and the lavers on the carts; one Sea and twelve oxen under it; also the pots, the shovels, the forks; and all their articles Hiram his master *craftsman* made of burnished bronze for King Solomon for the house of the LORD. In the plain of Jordan the king had them cast in clay molds, between Succoth and Zeredah.

a. **Then Hiram made:** Hiram was half Israeli and half Gentile, and he was the best craftsman around. Solomon hired him to do all his work -

that is, the fine artistic work of the temple.

b. **The pots and the shovels and the bowls:** These articles were of special note for the Chronicler, because these were some of the

only articles that were recovered and used from the first temple period into the days of the Chronicler.

i. "The emphasis on the temple vessels, as well as the association between Tent and temple, underlines the continuity represented by the temple. The return of the temple vessels to the second temple was one of the chief signs that post-exilic Israel remained a worshipping community of covenant people ( *cf.* Ezr. 1:7-11; 6:5; 8:24-34)." (Selman)

2. (18-22) Summary of the furnishings for the temple.

And Solomon had all these articles made in such great abundance that the weight of the bronze was not determined. Thus Solomon had all the furnishings made for the house of God: the altar of gold and the tables on which *was* the showbread; the lampstands with their lamps of pure gold, to burn in the prescribed manner in front of the inner sanctuary, with the flowers and the lamps and the wick-trimmers of gold, of purest gold; the trimmers, the bowls, the ladles, and the censers of pure gold. As for the entry of the sanctuary, its inner doors to the Most Holy *Place*, and the doors of the main hall of the temple, *were* gold.

a. **Such great abundance that the weight of the bronze was not determined:** " *The weight could not be found out.* This was as it should be. There was no attempt to keep an accurate account of what was given to the service of God. Even Solomon's left hand did not know what his right hand did. There is a tendency in all of us to keep a strict account of what we give to God . . . but the loftiest form of devotion overleaps such calculation." (Meyer) b. **With the flowers and the lamps:** "The symbolism of flora and fauna in the temple may either indicate God's sovereignty over the created order to be another allusion to the harmony of all created things in God's presence as in the Garden of Eden." (Selman)

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**2** He also made the big bronze basin called “The Sea.” It measured 15 feet from rim to rim, was circular in shape, and stood seven and one-half feet high. Its circumference was 45 feet. **3** Images of bulls were under it all the way around, ten every eighteen inches all the way around. The bulls were in two rows and had been cast with “The Sea.”

**4** “The Sea” stood on top of twelve bulls. Three faced northward, three westward, three southward, and three eastward. “The Sea” was placed on top of them, and they all faced outward. **5** It was four fingers thick and its rim was like that of a cup shaped like a lily blossom. It could hold 18,000 gallons. **6** He made ten washing basins; he put five on the south side and five on the north side. In them they rinsed the items used for burnt sacrifices; the priests washed in “The Sea.”

**7** He made ten gold lampstands according to specifications and put them in the temple, five on the right and five on the left. **8** He made ten tables and set them in the temple, five on the right and five on the left. He also made one hundred gold bowls. **9** He made the courtyard of the priests and the large enclosure and its doors; he plated their doors with bronze. **10** He put “The Sea” on the south side, in the southeast corner.

**11** Hiram Abi made the pots, shovels, and bowls. He finished all the work on God’s temple he had been assigned by King Solomon. **12** He made the two pillars, the two bowl-shaped tops of the pillars, the latticework for the bowl-shaped tops of the two pillars, **13** the four hundred pomegranate-shaped ornaments for the latticework of the two pillars (each latticework had two rows of these ornaments at the bowl-shaped top of the pillar), **14** the ten movable stands with their ten basins, **15** the big bronze basin called “The Sea” with its twelve bulls underneath, **16**

and the pots, shovels, and meat forks. All the items King Solomon assigned Hiram Abi to make for the LORD's temple were made from polished bronze. **17** The king had them cast in earthen foundries in the region of the Jordan between Succoth and Zarethan. **18** Solomon made so many of these items they did not weigh the bronze.

**19** Solomon also made these items for God's temple: the gold altar, the tables on which the Bread of the Presence was kept, **20** the pure gold lampstands and their lamps which burned as specified at the entrance to the inner sanctuary, **21** the pure gold flower-shaped ornaments, lamps, and tongs, **22** the pure gold trimming shears, basins, pans, and censers, and the gold door sockets for the inner sanctuary (the most holy place) and for the doors of the main hall of the temple.

**1** When Solomon had finished constructing the LORD's temple, he put the holy items that belonged to his father David (the silver, gold, and all the other articles) in the treasuries of God's temple.

Guzik - 2 Chronicles 5:1-14

***2 Chronicles 5 - The Ark is brought to the***

# Temple

A. The finished temple.

1. (1) Completion of the work.

So all the work that Solomon had done for the house of the LORD was finished; and Solomon brought in the things which his father David had dedicated: the silver and the gold and all the furnishings. And he put *them* in the treasuries of the house of God.

a. **All the work that Solomon had done for the house of the LORD was finished:** This was the great achievement of Solomon's life. He began this ambitious project shortly after he came to the throne, and now it was finished, certainly much to his satisfaction.

b. **Solomon brought in the things which his father David had dedicated:** This reminds us of just how much *David* did for the temple. He even designed, made, and

**dedicated** some the furnishings of the temple.

2. (2-5) The furniture of the temple is brought in before the assembled nation.

Now Solomon assembled the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes, the chief fathers of the children of Israel, in Jerusalem, that they might bring the ark of the covenant of the LORD up from the City of David, which *is* Zion. Therefore all the men of Israel assembled with the king at the feast, which *was* in the seventh month. So all the elders of Israel came, and the Levites took up the ark. Then they brought up the ark, the tabernacle of meeting, and all the holy furnishings that *were* in the tabernacle. The priests and the Levites brought them up.

a. **Solomon assembled the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes:** The official installation of the ark of

the covenant into the temple was an extremely important occasion.

Solomon wanted representatives of the entire kingdom to have a part in this memorable event.

**b. The priests and the Levites brought**

**them up:** This properly respected the pattern designated by the Mosaic Law. Solomon wanted representatives of the entire kingdom to witness the event, but not at the expense of disobedience to God's command.

3. (6-10) The ark comes into the Most Holy Place of the temple.

Also King Solomon, and all the congregation of Israel who were assembled with him before the ark, were sacrificing sheep and oxen that could not be counted or numbered for multitude. Then the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the LORD to its place, into the inner sanctuary of the temple, to the Most Holy *Place*, under the wings of the cherubim. For the cherubim spread *their* wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubim overshadowed the ark and its poles.

And the poles extended so that the ends of the poles of the ark could be seen from *the holy place*, in front of the inner sanctuary; but they could not be seen from outside. And they are there to this day. Nothing was in the ark except the two tablets which Moses put *there* at Horeb, when the LORD made *a covenant* with the children of Israel, when they had come out of Egypt.

**a. Sacrificing sheep and oxen that could not be counted or numbered for**

**multitude:** Solomon went "over-the-top" in his effort to honor and praise God on this great day.

**b. Then the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the LORD:** The temple wasn't "open" until the

ark of the covenant was set in the most holy place. The ark was the most important item in the temple.

c. **Under the wings of the cherubim:** The interior of the temple was richly decorated with the designs of cherubim, which surround the throne of God in heaven. This design of the temple was after the pattern of the tabernacle, which had woven designs of cherubim on the inner covering.

i. "The statement that 'they are still there today' must have been quoted by Ezra from his sources (2Ch. 9:2), particularly from 1 Kings (8:8), out of those portions that were written before the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. The ark had been gone for over a century by Ezra's day." (Payne)

d. **Nothing was in the ark except the two tablets which Moses put there at Horeb:** At an earlier point in Israel's history there were three items in the ark of the covenant. Earlier, inside the ark were the golden pot that had the manna (Exo. 16:33), Aaron's rod that budded (Num. 17:6-11), and the tablets of the covenant (Exo. 25:16). We don't know what happened to the golden pot of manna and Aaron's rod, but they were not in the ark when Solomon set it in the most holy place.

e. **When the LORD made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of Egypt:**

The reminder of the deliverance from Egypt is significant, because there is a sense in which this - some 500 years after the Exodus -

is the culmination of the deliverance from Egypt.

Out of Egypt and into the wilderness Israel, out of necessity, lived in tents - and the dwelling of God was a tent. Now since Solomon built the temple, the dwelling of God among Israel was a *building*, a place of permanence and security.

B. The glory of God fills the temple.

1. (11-12) The praise of the Levites at the installation of the ark of the covenant.

And it came to pass when the priests came out of the *Most Holy Place* (for all the priests who *were* present had sanctified themselves, without

keeping to their divisions), and the Levites *who were* the singers, all those of Asaph and Heman and Jeduthun, with their sons and their brethren, stood at the east end of the altar, clothed in white linen, having cymbals, stringed instruments and harps, and with them one hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets;

a. **For all the priests who were present had sanctified themselves, without keeping to their divisions:**

Normally the priests and Levites worked at the temple according to a strict schedule. Yet on this day, *all* the priests and Levites were on duty before the LORD.

b. **And the Levites who were the singers:** It was right that on this day praise be focused to *the LORD*, and not to Solomon or David. In reality, this was the LORD's house, not David's or Solomon's.

2. (13-14) The cloud of God's glory fills the temple.

Indeed it came to pass, when the trumpeters and singers *were* as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD, and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the LORD, *saying: "For He is good, For His mercy endures forever,"* that the house, the house of the LORD, was filled with a cloud, so that the priests could not continue ministering because of the cloud; for the glory of the LORD filled the house of God.

a. **That the house, the house of the LORD, was filled with a cloud:** This was the cloud of glory, seen often in the Old and New

Testaments, sometimes called the cloud of

Shekinah glory. It is hard to *define* the glory of God; we could call it the radiant outshining of His character and

presence. Here it is  
manifested in a cloud.



This is the cloud that stood by Israel in the wilderness (Exo. 13:21-22).



This is the cloud of glory that God spoke to Israel from (Exo. 16:10).



This is the cloud from which God met with  
Moses and others (Exo. 19:9, 24:15-18, Num. 11:25, 12:5, 16:42).



This is the cloud that stood by the door of the Tabernacle  
(Exo. 33:9-10).



This is the cloud from which God appeared to the High Priest  
in the Holy Place inside the veil (Lev. 16:2).



This is the cloud of Ezekiel's vision, filling the temple of God  
with the brightness of His glory (Eze. 10:4).



This is the cloud of glory that overshadowed Mary when she  
conceived Jesus by the power

of the Holy Spirit (Luk. 1:35).

· This is the cloud present at the transfiguration of Jesus (Luk. 9:34-35).



This is the cloud of glory that received Jesus into heaven at His ascension (Act. 1:9).



This is the cloud that will display the glory of Jesus Christ when He returns in triumph to this earth (Luk. 21:27, Rev. 1:7).

i. It is worthy of note that this great outpouring of the glory of God came in the context of intense and dedicated praise. God pours out His glory when His people praise Him. "We can never expect to have God in this house, or in our own houses, or in our own hearts, until we begin to praise him.

Unless as a people we unanimously, with one heart, though with many tongues, extol the King of kings, farewell to the hope that he will give us his presence in the future." (Spurgeon)

ii. "There is an order in this work which we do well to consider. Work performed according to the divine order, offered in sacrifice and praise, is acceptable to God.

Such work He receives by possessing it with His own presence and glory." (Morgan)

b. **So that the priests could not continue ministering because of the cloud:** The extreme presence of the glory of God made

*normal* service impossible. The sense of the presence of God was so intense that the priests felt it was impossible to continue in the building.

i. "As soon as the temple is opened for business, all the carefully planned ceremonies and services have to be suspended because God takes over the entire building for himself. The temple is to be for God's glory, not for that of human beings." (Selman)

ii. Jesus Himself was greater than the cloud that filled the temple and when *He* came it was fitting for the priests' temple service to stop. "This showed that the Levitical ministry should cease when the Lord Christ came." (Trapp)

iii. "The glory of God had filled the house, and *the priests were set aside*. Where God is, man is forgotten. You will think little of the minister save for his work's sake – you will talk the less of the man when you shall see the Master." (Spurgeon)

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**2** Then Solomon convened Israel's elders – all the leaders of the Israelite tribes and families – in Jerusalem, so they could witness the transferal of the ark of the covenant of the LORD from the City of David (that is, Zion). **3** All the men of Israel assembled before the king during the festival in the seventh month. **4** When all Israel's elders had arrived, the Levites lifted the ark. **5** The priests and Levites carried the ark, the tent where God appeared to his people, and all the holy items in the tent.

**6** Now King Solomon and all the Israelites who had assembled with him went on ahead of the ark and sacrificed more sheep and cattle than could be counted or numbered.

**7** The priests brought the ark of the covenant of the LORD to its assigned place in the inner sanctuary of the temple, in

the most holy place under the wings of the cherubs. **8** The cherubs' wings extended over the place where the ark sat; the cherubs overshadowed the ark and its poles. **9** The poles were so long their ends extending out from the ark were visible from in front of the inner sanctuary, but they could not be seen from beyond that point. They have remained there to this very day. **10**

There was nothing in the ark except the two tablets Moses had placed there in Horeb. (It was there that the LORD made an agreement with the Israelites after he brought them out of the land of Egypt.)

**11** The priests left the holy place. All the priests who participated had consecrated themselves, no matter which division they represented. **12** All the Levites who were musicians, including Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun, and their sons and relatives, wore linen. They played cymbals and stringed instruments as they stood east of the altar. They were accompanied by 120 priests who blew trumpets. **13**

The trumpeters and musicians played together, praising and giving thanks to the LORD. Accompanied by trumpets, cymbals, and other instruments, they loudly praised the LORD, singing: "Certainly he is good; certainly his loyal love endures!" Then a cloud filled the LORD's temple. **14**

The priests could not carry out their duties because of the cloud; the LORD's splendor filled God's temple.

**1** Then Solomon said, "The LORD has said that he lives in thick darkness.

Guzik - 2 Chronicles 6:1-42

## ***2 Chronicles 6 - Solomon's Prayer of Dedication***

A. Solomon blesses God.

1. (1-2) Acknowledgement of God's presence in the cloud.

Then Solomon spoke:

"The LORD said He would dwell in the dark cloud.

I have surely built You an exalted house,

And a place for You to dwell in forever."

a. **The LORD said He would dwell in the**

**dark cloud:** The cloud of God's glory has a long association with His presence.

**b. I have surely built You an exalted house, and a place for You to dwell in**

**forever:** Solomon rightly sensed that the presence of the cloud meant that God dwelt in the temple in a special way. As long as this did not slip into a superstitious misunderstanding, it was good to recognize a special place to come and meet with God.

i. "Though only Jesus is God incarnate, the temple was a clear sign that God in all his being was committed to living among his people." (Selman)

2. (3-9) Solomon blesses the people and blesses God.

Then the king turned around and blessed the whole assembly of Israel, while all the assembly of Israel was standing. And he said: "Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel, who has fulfilled with His hands *what* He spoke with His mouth to my father David, saying, 'Since the day that I brought My people out of the land of Egypt, I have chosen no city from any tribe of Israel *in which* to build a house, that My name might be there, nor did I choose any man to be a ruler over My people Israel. Yet I have chosen Jerusalem, that My name may be there; and I have chosen David to be over My people Israel.'

Now it was in the heart of my father David to build a temple for the name of the LORD God of Israel. But the LORD said to my father David,

'Whereas it was in your heart to build a temple for My name, you did well in that it was in your heart. Nevertheless you shall not build the temple, but your son who will come from your body, he shall build the temple for My name.'

**a. Who has fulfilled with His hands what He spoke with His mouth to my father**

**David:** Solomon recognized that the temple was the fulfillment of *God's* plan, not David's or Solomon's. David

and Solomon were human instruments, but the work was God's.

i. "The mention of God's hands (lit. 'fulfilled with his hands') really means that God's actions have confirmed his words – it is as if God's unseen hands were active in the all the human hands who contributed to the construction work ( *cf.* 1Ch. 29:16)." (Selman)

b. **Out of the land of Egypt:** Solomon presses the remembrance of the Exodus. Though it happened 500 years before, it was just as important and real for Israel as the day it happened.

c. **Nevertheless you shall not build the temple:** Though Solomon built the temple and not David, we are reminded of the extensive preparations David made for the temple. David prepared for the temple in every way he could short of actually building it, and he was happy for the credit and honor for building to go to his son Solomon.

i. "It confirms that David's disqualification was not due to sin, but because the concept of God's rest must be regarded as the unique and final stage in building the temple." (Selman)

3. (10-11) Solomon presents the finished temple unto God.

"So the LORD has fulfilled His word which He spoke, and I have filled the position of my father David, and sit on the throne of Israel, as the LORD promised; and I have built the temple for the name of the LORD God of Israel. And there I have put the ark, in which *is* the covenant of the LORD which He made with the children of Israel."

a. **I have filled the position of my father David, and sit on the throne of Israel, as the LORD promised:** Solomon recognized that his succession of David on the throne of Israel was a significant thing. He was the first king to follow his father as a hereditary monarch.

**b. There I have put the ark, in which is the covenant of the LORD:** The chief glory of the temple was that it was the resting place for the **ark** of the **covenant**, a representation of God's covenantal presence with His people.

B. Solomon's prayer.

1. (12-14) Humility before and praise unto God.

Then *Solomon* stood before the altar of the LORD

in the presence of all the assembly of Israel, and spread out his hands (for Solomon had made a bronze platform five cubits long, five cubits wide, and three cubits high, and had set it in the midst of the court; and he stood on it, knelt down on his knees before all the assembly of Israel, and spread out his hands toward heaven); and he said: "LORD God of Israel, *there is* no God in heaven or on earth like You, who keep *Your* covenant and mercy with Your servants who walk before You with all their hearts.

**a. Stood before the altar of the LORD:** Solomon did not dedicate the temple from *within* the temple. It would be inappropriate for him to do so, because he was a king and not a priest. The holy place and most holy place were only for chosen descendants of the High Priest.

**b. And spread out his hands:** This was the most common posture of prayer in the Old Testament. Many modern people close their eyes, bow their head, and fold their hands as they pray, but the Old Testament tradition was to spread out the hands toward heaven in a gesture of surrender, openness, and ready reception.

i. "It is worthy of remark concerning this prayer that it is as full and comprehensive as if it were meant to be the summary of all future prayers offered in the temple." (Spurgeon)

ii. "One is struck, moreover, with the fact that the language is far from new, and is full of quotations from the Pentateuch, some of which are almost word for word, while the sense of the whole may be found in those memorable passages in Leviticus and Deuteronomy." (Spurgeon)

c. **There is no God in heaven above or on earth below like You:** Solomon recognized that God was completely unique. The pretended gods of the nations could not compare to Him in any way.

2. (15-17) Solomon recognizes God as the maker and keeper of promises.

"You have kept what You promised Your servant David my father; You have both spoken with Your mouth and fulfilled *it* with Your hand, as *it is* this day. Therefore, LORD God of Israel, now keep what You promised Your servant David my father, saying, 'You shall not fail to have a man sit before Me on the throne of Israel, only if your sons take heed to their way, that they walk in My law as you have walked before Me.' And now, O LORD God of Israel, let Your word come true, which You have spoken to Your servant David."

a. **You have kept what You promised:**

Solomon first thanked and praised God for His *past* fulfillment of promises.

b. **Now keep what You promised Your servant David . . . let Your word come**

**true:** Solomon called upon God to keep the promises that He made. This is the great secret to power in prayer - to take God's promises to heart in faith, and then boldly and reverently call upon Him to fulfill the promises.

i. "God sent the promise on purpose to be used. If I see a Bank of England note, it is a promise for a certain amount of money, and

I take it and use it. But oh I my friend, do try and use God's promises; nothing pleases God better than to see his promises put in

circulation; he loves to see his children bring them up to him, and say, 'LORD, do as thou

hast said.' And let me tell you that it glorifies God to use his promises." (Spurgeon)

ii. This kind of prayer *lays hold of* God's promise. Just because God promises does

not mean that we possess. Through

believing prayer like this, God promises and we appropriate.

If we don't appropriate in

faith, God's promise is left unclaimed.

3. (18-21) Solomon asks God to dwell in this place and honor those who seek Him here.

"But will God indeed dwell with men on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of

heavens cannot contain You. How much less this temple which I have built! Yet regard the prayer of Your servant and

his supplication, O LORD my God, and listen to the cry and

the prayer which Your servant is praying before You: that

Your eyes may be open toward this temple day and night,

toward the place where *You* said *You would* put Your name,

that You may hear the prayer which Your servant prays

toward this place. And may You hear the supplications of

Your servant and of Your people Israel, when they pray

toward this place. Hear from heaven Your dwelling place,

and when You hear,

forgive."

a. **How much less this temple which I have built!** We

are glad that Solomon said this. From prior statements his statement in 2Ch. 6:1-2 we might have thought that

Solomon drifted

towards a superstitious idea that God actually lived in the

temple to the exclusion of other places. It was important to

recognize that

though God had a *special* presence in the temple, He was far too great to be restricted to the temple.

**b. May You hear the supplication of Your servant and of Your people Israel, when**

**they pray toward this place:** Solomon asked God to incline His ear towards the king and the people when they prayed from the temple. For this reason, many observant Jews still pray facing the direction of the site of the temple in Jerusalem.

**c. When You hear, forgive:** Solomon knew that the most important thing Israel needed was *forgiveness*. This was the greatest answer to prayer Israel could expect from God.

4. (22-23) Hear when Your people take an oath at the temple.

"If anyone sins against his neighbor, and is forced to take an oath, and comes *and* takes an oath before Your altar in this temple, then hear from heaven, and act, and judge Your servants, bringing retribution on the wicked by bringing his way on his own head, and justifying the righteous by giving him according to his righteousness."

**a. And comes and takes an oath before**

**Your altar in this temple:** The temple grounds were used as a place to verify and

authorize oaths. When a dispute came down to one word against another, Solomon asked that the temple would be a place to properly swear by.

**b. Hear in heaven, and act, and judge Your servants:**

Solomon asked the God who can see what man can't - who knows the hidden heart of man - and to enforce from heaven the oaths made at the temple.

i. The old Puritan commentator John Trapp could not resist mentioning a fulfillment of this principle in his own day: "Anne Averies, who, forswearing herself, A.D. 1575,

February 11, at a shop of Wood Street in London, praying God she might sink where

she stood if she had not paid for the wares she took, fell down presently speechless, and with horrible stink died."

5. (24-25) Hear when Your people are defeated.

"Or if Your people Israel are defeated before an enemy because they have sinned against You, and return and confess Your name, and pray and make supplication before You in this temple, then hear from heaven and forgive the sin of Your people Israel, and bring them back to the land which You gave to them and their fathers."

**a. If Your people Israel are defeated**

**before an enemy:** Many times in their history, Israel suffered defeat and could only cry out to God. It was even worse when the defeat was

because they had **sinned against** the LORD Himself.

**b. Return and confess Your name, and pray and make supplication before You in this temple, then hear from heaven:**

Solomon asked God to hear the prayers of a defeated, yet humble and penitent Israel. God answered this prayer of Solomon, and He forgave and restored His defeated people when they came in humble repentance.

6. (26-31) Hear in times of plague and famine.

"When the heavens are shut up and there is no rain because they have sinned against You, when they pray toward this place and confess Your name, and turn from their sin because You afflict them, then hear *in* heaven, and forgive the sin of Your servants, Your people Israel, that You may teach them the good way in which they should walk; and send rain on Your land which You have given to Your people as an inheritance. When there is famine in the land, pestilence or blight or mildew, locusts or grasshoppers; when their enemies besiege them in the land of their cities; whatever plague or whatever sickness *there is*; whatever

prayer, whatever supplication is *made* by anyone, or by all Your people Israel, when each one knows his own burden and his own

grief, and spreads out his hands to this temple: then hear from heaven Your dwelling place, and forgive, and give to everyone according to all his ways, whose heart You know (for You alone

know the hearts of the sons of men), that they may fear You, to walk in Your ways as long as they live in the land which You gave to our fathers."

**a. When the heavens are shut up and**

**there is no rain:** Drought was a constant threat for the agriculturally based economy of Israel. If there was no rain, there was no food.

**b. When they pray toward this place and**

**confess Your name, and turn from their**

**sin because You afflict them, then hear in heaven:**

Solomon doesn't take it for granted that God would forgive and hear His repentant people. God's good response to our repentance comes from His *grace*, not from *justice*.

i. "It is not therefore to be wondered at that, when Solomon dedicated to the Lord the

temple which he had built, his great petition was that God would hear every prayer that

should be uttered in that place or toward

that place. He wished the temple always to

be to Israel the token that God's memorial is that he hears prayer." (Spurgeon)

7. (32-33) Hear when a foreigner prays.

"Moreover, concerning a foreigner, who is not of Your people Israel, but who comes from a far country for the sake of Your great name and Your mighty hand and Your outstretched arm, when they come and pray in this temple; then hear from heaven Your dwelling place, and do

according to all for which the foreigner calls to You, that all peoples of the earth may know Your name and fear You, as

do Your people Israel, and that they may know that this temple which I have built is called by Your name."

a. **Moreover, concerning a foreigner:** The temple was in Israel but it was always intended to be a house of prayer for *all* nations (Isa.

56:7). God wanted the court of the Gentiles to be a place where the nations could come and pray.

i. The violation of this principle made Jesus angry. When He came to the temple and

found the outer courts - the only place

where the Gentile nations could come a pray

- more like a swap meet than a house of

prayer, He drove out the moneychangers

and the merchants (Mat. 21:13).

b. **Hear from heaven Your dwelling place, and do according to all for which the**

**foreigner calls to You, that all peoples of the earth may know Your name and fear**

**You:** Solomon asked God to hear the prayer of the foreigner out of a *missionary* impulse. He knew that when God mercifully answered the

prayers of foreigners, it drew those from other nations to the God of all nations.

i. "What is especially notable is that foreigners could know and fear God 'like

your people Israel.' This hope of equality in worship was rarely expressed in the Old

Testament ( e.g. Gen. 12:3; Isa. 19:24-25; Zec. 8:20-22), and even Jesus' closest

disciples found its fulfillment hard to take (Act. 10:1-11:18)." (Selman)

8. (34-39) Hear when Israel goes out to battle and prays from captivity.

"When Your people go out to battle against their enemies, wherever You send them, and when

they pray to You toward this city which You have chosen and the temple which I have built for Your name, then hear from heaven their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause.

When they sin against You (for *there is* no one who does not sin), and You become angry with them and deliver them to the enemy, and they take them captive to a land far or near; *yet* when they come to themselves in the land where they were carried captive, and repent, and make supplication to You in the land of their captivity, saying, 'We have sinned, we have done wrong, and have committed wickedness'; and *when* they return to You with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their captivity, where they have been carried captive, and pray toward their land which You gave to their fathers, the city which You have chosen, and toward the temple which I have built for Your name: then hear from heaven Your dwelling place their prayer and their supplications, and maintain their cause, and forgive Your people who have sinned against You."

**a. When Your people go out to battle**

**against their enemies, wherever You send them:**

Solomon prayed with the idea that God should answer the prayers for victory made in foreign lands towards the temple, but only when they battle as God *sent* them. This was not a blanket request for blessing on every military adventure.

**b. When they sin against You (for there is no one who does not sin):** This is a succinct Old Testament statement of the principle most clearly stated in Rom. 3:23: *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*

i. "The sense that sin is all-pervading dominates, epitomized in one of the clearest biblical statements about sin's universality ( *there is no-one who does not sin*, v. 36).

No greater indication of the need for a place of atonement and forgiveness could be given." (Selman)

**c. When they come to themselves in the**

**land where they were carried captive:** Solomon also asked God to hear Israel's prayer from captivity in a foreign land. This recognized that the God of the Temple could answer

prayers made away from the temple.

5. (40-42) Conclusion: God, make Yourself at home among us

"Now, my God, I pray, let Your eyes be open and *let* Your ears *be* attentive to the prayer *made* in this place. Now therefore, Arise, O LORD God, to Your resting place, You and the ark of Your strength. Let Your priests, O LORD God, be clothed with salvation, And let Your saints rejoice in goodness. O LORD God, do not turn away the face of Your Anointed; Remember the mercies of Your servant David."

**a. Arise, O LORD God, to Your resting**

**place, You and the ark of Your strength:** This conclusion of prayer has Num. 10:35-36 in mind, when Israel moved the ark of the

covenant, the tabernacle, and the whole camp of Israel from place to place through the

wilderness during the exodus. Solomon used the phrasing of that passage to emphasize that the ark of the covenant and the symbol of God's presence would wander no more and had finally come to its final **resting place**.

**b. Do not turn away the face of Your**

**Anointed:** Solomon probably meant this in reference to himself because he was the

anointed king of Israel. Nevertheless, it also reminds us of the principle of prayer of praying in the name of Jesus, the ultimate **Anointed One**.

i. "In his prayer 'do not reject your anointed one,' the king now meant himself, though in subsequent usage it would express Israel's

hope in the coming Messiah." (Payne)

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**2** O LORD, I have built a lofty temple for you, a place where you can live permanently.” **3** Then the king turned around and pronounced a blessing over the whole Israelite assembly as they stood there. **4** He said, “The LORD God of Israel is worthy of praise because he has fulfilled what he promised my father David. **5** He told David, ‘Since the day I brought my people out of the land of Egypt, I have not chosen a city from all the tribes of Israel to build a temple in which to live. Nor did I choose a man as leader of my people Israel. **6** But now I have chosen Jerusalem as a place to live, and I have chosen David to lead my people Israel.’ **7** Now my father David had a strong desire to build a temple to honor the LORD God of Israel. **8** The LORD told my father David, ‘It is right for you to have a strong desire to build a temple to honor me. **9** But you will not build the temple; your very own son will build the temple for my honor.’ **10** The LORD has kept the promise he made. I have taken my father David’s place and have occupied the throne of Israel, as the LORD promised. I have built this temple for the honor of the LORD God of Israel **11** and set up in it a place for the ark containing the covenant the LORD made with the Israelites.”

**12** He stood before the altar of the LORD in front of the entire assembly of Israel and spread out his hands. **13** Solomon had made a bronze platform and had placed it in the middle of the enclosure. It was seven and one-half feet long, seven and one-half feet wide, and four and one-half feet high. He stood on it and then got down on his knees in front of the entire assembly of Israel. He spread out his hands toward the sky, **14** and prayed: “O LORD God of Israel, there is no god like you in heaven or on earth! You maintain covenantal loyalty to your servants who obey you with sincerity. **15** You have kept your word to your servant, my father David; this very day you have fulfilled

what you promised. **16** Now, O LORD God of Israel, keep the promise you made to your servant, my father David, when you said, 'You will never fail to have a successor ruling before me on the throne of Israel, provided that your descendants watch their step and obey my law as you have done.' **17** Now, O LORD God of Israel, may the promise you made to your servant David be realized.

**18** "God does not really live with humankind on the earth! Look, if the sky and the highest heaven cannot contain you, how much less this temple I have built! **19**

But respond favorably to your servant's prayer and his request for help, O LORD my God. Answer the desperate prayer your servant is presenting to you. **20** Night and day may you watch over this temple, the place where you promised you would live. May you answer your servant's prayer for this place. **21** Respond to the requests of your servant and your people Israel for this place. Hear from your heavenly dwelling place and respond favorably and forgive.

**22** "When someone is accused of sinning against his neighbor and the latter pronounces a curse on the alleged offender before your altar in this temple, **23** listen from heaven and make a just decision about your servants' claims. Condemn the guilty party, declare the other innocent, and give both of them what they deserve.

**24** "If your people Israel are defeated by an enemy because they sinned against you, then if they come back to you, renew their allegiance to you, and pray for your help before you in this temple, **25** then listen from heaven, forgive the sin of your people Israel, and bring them back to the land you gave to them and their ancestors.

**26** "The time will come when the skies are shut up tightly and no rain falls because your people sinned against you. When they direct their prayers toward this place, renew their allegiance to you, and turn away from their sin because you punish them, **27** then listen from heaven and forgive the sin of your servants, your people Israel. Certainly you will then

teach them the right way to live and send rain on your land that you have given your people to possess.

**28** “The time will come when the land suffers from a famine, a plague, blight, and disease, or a locust invasion, or when their enemy lays siege to the cities of the land, or when some other type of plague or epidemic occurs. **29**

When all your people Israel pray and ask for help, as they acknowledge their intense pain and spread out their hands toward this temple, **30** then listen from your heavenly dwelling place, forgive their sin, and act favorably toward each one based on your evaluation of their motives.

(Indeed you are the only one who can correctly evaluate the motives of all people.) **31** Then they will honor you by obeying you throughout their lifetimes as they live on the land you gave to our ancestors.

**32** “Foreigners, who do not belong to your people Israel, will come from a distant land because of your great reputation and your ability to accomplish mighty deeds; they will come and direct their prayers toward this temple.

**33** Then listen from your heavenly dwelling place and answer all the prayers of the foreigners. Then all the nations of the earth will acknowledge your reputation, obey you like your people Israel do, and recognize that this temple I built belongs to you.

**34** “When you direct your people to march out and fight their enemies, and they direct their prayers to you toward this chosen city and this temple I built for your honor, **35** then listen from heaven to their prayers for help and vindicate them.

**36** “The time will come when your people will sin against you (for there is no one who is sinless!) and you will be angry at them and deliver them over to their enemies, who will take them as prisoners to their land, whether far away or close by. **37** When your people come to their senses in the land where they are held prisoner, they will repent and beg for your mercy in the land of their imprisonment, admitting,

‘We have sinned and gone astray, we have done evil!’ **38** When they return to you with all their heart and being in the land where they are held prisoner and direct their prayers toward the land you gave to their ancestors, your chosen city, and the temple I built for your honor, **39** then listen from your heavenly dwelling place to their prayers for help, vindicate them, and forgive your sinful people.

**40** “Now, my God, may you be attentive and responsive to the prayers offered in this place. **41** Now ascend, O LORD God, to your resting place, you and the ark of your strength! May your priests, O LORD God, experience your deliverance! May your loyal followers rejoice in the prosperity you give! **42** O LORD God, do not reject your chosen ones! Remember the faithful promises you made to your servant David!”

**1** When Solomon finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the LORD’s splendor filled the temple.

Guzik - 2 Chronicles 7:1-22

## ***2 Chronicles 7 - The Temple Dedicated***

A. Dedication by God and man.

1. (1-3) The temple is dedicated by God with fire from heaven.

When Solomon had finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the LORD filled the temple. And the priests could not enter the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD had filled the Lord's house. When all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the LORD on the temple, they bowed their faces to the ground on the pavement, and worshiped and praised the LORD, *saying: "For He is good, for His mercy endures forever."*

a. **Fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the**

**sacrifices:** This is one of the remarkable instances in the Old Testament of God sending fire from heaven to consume a sacrifice. It was a dramatic and visible proof of God's approval, **and the glory of the LORD filled the temple.**

i. "This fire was kept alive till the captivity of Babylon: and after that, it was said to have been miraculously renewed [in the days of the Maccabees]." (Trapp)

b. **The priests could not enter the house of the LORD:** This repeats the occasion first described in 2Ch. 5:14.

c. **They bowed their faces to the ground on the pavement, and worshiped and praised the LORD:** The people responded with a combination of reverence and worship. Their awe-filled praise glorified the goodness and mercy of God.

i. One might think that consuming fire from heaven might make them more aware of the power and judgment of God. Yet the whole situation seems to have made them more aware of the goodness and mercy of God.

d. **For He is good, for His mercy endures forever:** This familiar refrain is connected with Psalms 136 and 118, and with 2Ch. 5:13.

Seeing all they could of God's great works, they could not help having this strong emphasis on the goodness and mercy of God.

2. (4-5) The temple is dedicated by man with a multitude of sacrifices.

Then the king and all the people offered sacrifices before the LORD. King Solomon offered a sacrifice of twenty-two thousand bulls and one hundred and twenty thousand sheep. So the king and all the people dedicated the house of God.

a. **The king and all the people offered**

**sacrifices before the LORD:** As wonderful as the program and the praise were, they could not replace the **sacrifices**. God still had to be honored through blood sacrifice, both for atonement and as a demonstration of fellowship with God.

**b. King Solomon offered a sacrifice of twenty-two thousand bulls and one**

**hundred and twenty thousand sheep:** This is a staggering - almost grotesque - amount of sacrifice. Each animal was ritually sacrificed and a portion was dedicated to the LORD, and a

portion given to the priests and the people. It was enough to feed a vast multitude for two weeks.

3. (6-10) The days of praise and feasting for the dedication of the temple.

And the priests attended to their services; the Levites also with instruments of the music of the LORD, which King David had made to praise the LORD, saying, "For His mercy *endures* forever,"

whenever David offered praise by their ministry.

The priests sounded trumpets opposite them, while all Israel stood. Furthermore Solomon consecrated the middle of the court that *was* in front of the house of the LORD; for there he offered burnt offerings and the fat of the peace offerings, because the bronze altar which

Solomon had made was not able to receive the burnt offerings, the grain offerings, and the fat.

At that time Solomon kept the feast seven days, and all Israel with him, a very great assembly from the entrance of Hamath to the Brook of Egypt. And on the eighth day they held a sacred assembly, for they observed the dedication of the altar seven days, and the feast seven days. On the twenty-third day of the seventh month he sent the people away to their tents, joyful and glad of heart for the good that the LORD had done for David, for Solomon, and for His people Israel.

a. **The priests attended to their services; the Levites also with instruments of the music of the LORD:** On such a great occasion everyone must be about their work. The priests had so many sacrifices to administer that they specially consecrated the area in front of the temple to receive sacrifices, because **the bronze altar which Solomon had made was not able to receive the burnt offerings.**

b. **At that time Solomon kept the feast seven days, and all Israel with him:** From the time of year and the length of this **feast**, we understand that this was the Feast of Tabernacles, extended beyond its normal seven days on this special occasion.

i. "Their unity is expressed in geographical terms as well as by a unity of spirit - *Lebo Hamath to the Wadi of Egypt* indicates the widest possible extent of Israel's occupation of the Promised Land." (Selman)

c. **For the good that the LORD had done for David, for Solomon, and for His people Israel:** This account of the dedication of the temple ends where the story of the temple began - with David, not Solomon. The writer remembers that it was David's heart and vision that started the work of the temple.

4. (11) Conclusion: the work successfully accomplished.

Thus Solomon finished the house of the LORD and the king's house; and Solomon successfully accomplished all that came into his heart to make in the house of the LORD and in his own house.

a. **Thus Solomon finished the house of the LORD and the king's house:** 1 Kings 7 goes into more detail about Solomon's palace. It seems that his palace was even more spectacular than the temple, based on the

number of years it took him to build it.

b. **Solomon successfully accomplished all that came into his heart:** It was the end of a well done job, a job that began with Solomon's father David.

B. God appears to Solomon again.

1. (12-16) The assurance of answered prayer from the temple.

Then the LORD appeared to Solomon by night, and said to him: "I have heard your prayer, and have chosen this place for Myself as a house of sacrifice. When I shut up heaven and there is no rain, or command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence among My people, if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land. Now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to prayer *made* in this place. For now I have chosen and sanctified this house, that My name may be there forever; and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually."

a. **The LORD appeared to Solomon by**

**night:** This was actually the *second* great appearance of God to Solomon (1Ki. 9:1-2). The first is described in 1Ki. 3:5-9. It was good of God to appear to Solomon the first time; it was even better of God to grant a unique appearance to Solomon the second time.

i. "Brethren, we want renewed appearances, fresh manifestations, new visitations from on high; and I commend to those of you who are getting on in life, that while you thank God for the past, and look back with joy to his visits to you in your early days, you now seek and ask for a second visitation of the Most High." (Spurgeon)

ii. After Solomon built the temple and his palace he came to the most dangerous

period of his life – a season *after* great blessing and accomplishment. God

graciously gave Solomon a fresh revelation of Himself before this dangerous period.

iii. "The words speak to us also. No height attained, no work done, no blessing

received, is in itself sufficient to ensure our continuance in favor. Nothing but continued fidelity can do that." (Morgan)

b. **I have heard your prayer:** The great prayer of Solomon in 1 Kings 8 meant nothing unless God **heard** the prayer. The true measure of our prayer is if God in heaven *answers* the prayer.

i. This answer seems to have come many years after the actual dedication of the temple. Yet God also gave Solomon an immediate answer of approval at the time of dedication, when the sacrifices were consumed with fire from heaven (2Ch. 7:1-7).

c. **Have chosen this place for Myself as a house of sacrifice:** The building was Solomon's work, done in the power and

inspiration of the LORD. The *consecration* of the building was God's work. Solomon could build a building, but only God could hallow it with His presence.

i. "It is to be a house of prayer and a (literal) 'house of sacrifice' . . . This combination of the temple's functions is striking, and is one of the several indications in 2 Chronicles 5-7

that prayer and sacrifice are to be understood as 'two sides of the same coin.'" (Selman)

ii. "By presenting the temple as a place where right sacrifice and prayer could be accepted, an opening was being provided to exchange Israel's present bleak

circumstances for a more positive future. It offered an opportunity to change the course of Israel's history." (Selman)

d. **If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and**

**seek My face:** This wonderful promise is in the context of God's promise to answer prayer from the temple which He chose to hallow with His presence. God promised something special to Israel when they did **humble themselves** and did **pray** and **seek** God's **face**.

i. There is something naturally **humble** in true prayer because it recognizes that the answers are not in self and they are in God.

God promises something special to **humble**, praying people.

ii. The phrase **My people who are called**

**by My name** had its first application to the people of Israel as they lived in the land God promised them. Nevertheless, the same God

who made this promise to Israel still reigns in the heavens and will still respond to His humble praying people today.

iii. "Although God's invitation is initially given to *my people* (2Ch. 7:14), 2Ch. 6:32-33 has made clear that anyone who acknowledges

God's name and authority may pray with the

same confidence of a hearing. This passage

is therefore consistent with others where the invitation is explicitly extended to 'all who call upon the name of the LORD . . .'" (Selman)

e. **And turn from their wicked ways:** This great promise of answered prayer in 2Ch. 7:14

also includes the condition of repentance. As the people of God **humble** themselves, **pray and seek** the **face** of God, they must also **turn from their wicked ways**. It wasn't enough to merely turn their *heart* to God; they must also turn their *life* to God.

f. **Then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land:** God simply promises to hear the prayer of his

humble, prayerful, seeking, repentant people.

He will bring forgiveness to His people and healing to their land.

i. "These expressions are best understood as four facets of one attitude, that sinners should seek God himself in humble repentance, rather than four separate steps on a long road to forgiveness." (Selman)

- We can see what it means to **humble** one's self by looking at Rehoboam (2Ch. 12:6, 7, and 12), Hezekiah (2Ch. 30:11 and 32:26), and Manasseh (2Ch. 33:12, 19, and 23).

- We can see what it means to **pray** by looking at Hezekiah (2Ch. 30:18 and 32:20) and Manasseh (2Ch. 33:13).

- We can see what it means to **seek** by looking at the returning priests (2Ch. 11:16) and Jehoshaphat (2Ch. 20:3-4).

- We can see what it means to **turn** by looking at Hezekiah (2Ch. 30:6 and 30:9)

ii. "Healing throughout the Old Testament has a mixture of spiritual and physical applications. Sometimes healing is specifically equated with forgiveness ( *e.g.* Hos. 14:4; Isa. 53:5, 57:18-19; Psa. 41:5); at other times it relates to physical healing ( *e.g.* Gen. 20:17; Num. 13:20; 2Ki. 20:5, 8).

When it is applied to the land, as here, it can refer to bringing the exiles back to the Promised Land (Jer. 30:17; 33:6-7) or restoring the land and its people to peace and security (Jer. 33:6; Isa.

57:19)." (Selman)

**g. Now My eyes will be open and My ears**

**attentive to prayer made in this place:** God promised a special attention to the prayers offered from the temple which Solomon, the son of David built. We can be much more confident of His attention to our prayers when we offer them in the name of Jesus, the Son of David.

He is better access to God than even the temple was.

**h. My eyes and My heart will be there**

**perpetually:** "The idea of God having a heart is extremely rare in the Bible, and only other explicit reference speaks of God suffering heart pains because of the evil of humanity (Gen. 6:6; *cf.* also Gen. 8:21; 1Sa. 13:14; Act. 13:22). . . It is hard to think of a more intimate way to indicate God's nearness, or a greater encouragement to prayer." (Selman)

**2. (17-22) God's warning to Solomon.**

"As for you, if you walk before Me as your father David walked, and do according to all that I have commanded you, and if you keep My statutes

and My judgments, then I will establish the throne of your kingdom, as I covenanted with David your father, saying, 'You shall not fail *to have* a man as ruler in Israel.' But if you turn away and forsake My statutes and My commandments which I have set before you, and go and serve other gods, and worship them, then I will uproot them from My land which I have given them; and this house which I have

sanctified for My name I will cast out of My sight, and will make it a proverb and a byword among all peoples. And *as for* this house, which is exalted, everyone who passes by it will be

astonished and say, 'Why has the LORD done thus to this land and this house?' Then they will answer, 'Because they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, who

brought them out of the land of Egypt, and embraced other gods, and worshiped them and served them; therefore He has brought all this calamity on them.'"

a. **If you walk before Me as your father**

**David walked . . . then I will establish the throne of your kingdom:** God's answer to Solomon's previous prayer had a great

*condition*. If Solomon walked before God in obedience and faithfulness, he could expect blessing on his reign and the reign of his

descendants, and the dynasty of David would endure forever.

i. God did not demand perfect obedience from Solomon. David certainly did not walk perfectly before the LORD, and God told

Solomon to **walk before Me as your**

**father David walked**. This was not out of reach for Solomon.

b. **But if you turn away and forsake My statutes and My commandments . . . then**

**I will uproot them:** The positive promise is followed by a negative promise. If Solomon or his descendants **turn away and forsake** God and His word, then God promised to correct a disobedient Israel.

c. **And this house which I have sanctified for My name I will cast out of My sight:** God answered to Solomon's prayer was not an unqualified promise to bless the temple in any circumstance. God blessed the temple and filled it with the glory of His presence, but he would cast it out of His sight if the kings of Israel forsook the LORD.

i. With such a glorious temple, Israel would be tempted to forsake the God of the temple and make an idol of the temple of God. Here the LORD made them know that He could

never bless this error.

**d. Will make it a proverb and a byword among all peoples . . . everyone who**

**passes by it will be astonished:** Under the Old Covenant, God promised to use Israel to exalt Himself among the nations one way or another. If Israel obeyed He would bless them so much that others had to recognize the hand of God upon Israel. If Israel disobeyed He

would chastise them so severely that the nations would **be astonished** at the hard work of God among His disobedient people, and they would know that the LORD **has brought all this calamity on them.**

i. "The *manner* in which these disobedient people have been destroyed is truly

*astonishing*: no nation was every so highly favoured, and none ever so severely and signally punished." (Clarke)

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**2** The priests were unable to enter the LORD's temple because the LORD's splendor filled the LORD's temple. **3**

When all the Israelites saw the fire come down and the LORD's splendor over the temple, they got on their knees with their faces downward toward the pavement. They worshiped and gave thanks to the LORD, saying,

"Certainly he is good; certainly his loyal love endures!"

**4** The king and all the people were presenting sacrifices to the LORD. **5** King Solomon sacrificed 22,000 cattle and 120,000 sheep. Then the king and all the people dedicated God's temple. **6** The priests stood in their assigned spots, along with the Levites who had the musical instruments used for praising the LORD. (These were the ones King David made for giving thanks to the LORD and which were used by David when he offered praise, saying, "Certainly his loyal love endures.") Opposite the Levites, the priests were blowing the trumpets, while all Israel stood there. **7**

Solomon consecrated the middle of the courtyard that is in front of the LORD's temple. He offered burnt sacrifices, grain offerings, and the fat from the peace offerings there, because the bronze altar that Solomon had made was too small to hold all these offerings. **8** At that time Solomon and all Israel with him celebrated a festival for seven days.

This great assembly included people from Lebo Hamath in the north to the Brook of Egypt in the south. **9** On the eighth day they held an assembly, for they had dedicated the altar for seven days and celebrated the festival for seven more days. **10** On the twenty-third day of the seventh month, Solomon sent the people home. They left happy and contented because of the good the LORD had done for David, Solomon, and his people Israel.

**11** After Solomon finished building the LORD's temple and the royal palace, and accomplished all his plans for the LORD's temple and his royal palace, **12** the LORD

appeared to Solomon at night and said to him: "I have answered your prayer and chosen this place to be my temple where sacrifices are to be made. **13** When I close up the sky so that it doesn't rain, or command locusts to devour the land's vegetation, or send a plague among my people, **14** if my people, who belong to me, humble themselves, pray, seek to please me, and repudiate their sinful practices, then I will respond from heaven, forgive their sin, and heal their land. **15** Now I will be attentive and responsive to the prayers offered in this place. **16** Now I have chosen and consecrated this temple by making it my permanent home; I will be constantly present there. **17**

You must serve me as your father David did. Do everything I commanded and obey my rules and regulations. **18** Then I will establish your dynasty, just as I promised your father David, 'You will not fail to have a successor ruling over Israel.'

**19** "But if you people ever turn away from me, fail to obey the regulations and rules I instructed you to keep, and

decide to serve and worship other gods, **20** then I will remove you from my land I have given you, I will abandon this temple I have consecrated with my presence, and I will make you an object of mockery and ridicule among all the nations. **21** As for this temple, which was once majestic, everyone who passes by it will be shocked and say, 'Why did the LORD do this to this land and this temple?' **22** Others will then answer, 'Because they abandoned the LORD God of their ancestors, who led them out of Egypt. They embraced other gods whom they worshiped and served. That is why he brought all this disaster down on them.'"

**1** After twenty years, during which Solomon built the LORD's temple and his royal palace,

Guzik - 2 Chronicles 8:1-18

### ***2 Chronicles 8 - Achievements of Solomon***

A. Solomon and the surrounding nations.

1. (1-6) The dominion of Solomon.

It came to pass at the end of twenty years, in which Solomon had built the house of the LORD

and his own house, that the cities which Hiram had given to Solomon, Solomon built them; and he settled the children of Israel there. And Solomon went to Hamath Zobah and seized it. He also built Tadmor in the wilderness, and all the storage cities which he built in Hamath. He built Upper Beth Horon and Lower Beth Horon,

fortified cities *with* walls, gates, and bars, also Baalath and all the storage cities that Solomon had, and all the chariot cities and the cities of the cavalry, and all that Solomon desired to build in Jerusalem, in Lebanon, and in all the land of his dominion.

a. **At the end of twenty years:** It took Solomon seven years to build the temple and 13

years to build his palace. At the end of these **twenty years** his kingdom was secure, stable, and blessed.

b. **He also built . . . He built . . . and all that Solomon desired to build in Jerusalem:** This passage reflects

Solomon's great heart and ambition as a *builder*. He energetically settled new cities and built storage cities, fortifications, chariot cities, and cities of the cavalry.

i. A problem comes in reconciling the mention of the cities that Hiram gave to Solomon, because 1Ki. 9:11-14 indicates that they were given *by* Solomon to Hiram.

"While textual disturbance is possible, it seems more probable that they had been returned to Solomon, either because they were unacceptable (1Ki. 9:12-13) or because they had been collateral for a loan (1Ki.

9:14)." (Selman)

ii. Sadly, this new emphasis on chariots and cavalry shows that Solomon did not take

God's word as seriously as he should. In

Deu. 17:16, God spoke specifically to the

future kings of Israel: *But he shall not multiply horses for himself*. It would be much better of Solomon had the heart reflected in Psa. 20:7: *Some trust in*

*chariots, and some in horses; but we will remember the name of the LORD our God*.

2. (7-10) Solomon and the conquered peoples of his dominion.

All the people *who were* left of the Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, who *were* not of Israel; that is, their descendants who were left in the land after them, whom the

children of Israel did not destroy; from these Solomon raised forced labor, as it is to this day.

But Solomon did not make the children of Israel servants for his work. Some *were* men of war, captains of his officers, captains of his chariots, and his cavalry. And others *were* chiefs of the officials of King Solomon: two hundred and fifty, who ruled over the people.

**a. From these Solomon raised forced**

**labor:** Solomon's practice of using the people of neighboring conquered nations as **forced labor** is also described in 1Ki. 5:15-18.

b. **Solomon did not make the children of Israel servants for his work:** Israelites were used for the work of building the temple and Solomon's palace, but they were not forced

labor (1Ki. 5:13-14). They were often used in the management of the forced labor (**who ruled over the people**).

B. Solomon and the daughter of Pharaoh.

1. (11) Solomon marries an Egyptian princess.

Now Solomon brought the daughter of Pharaoh up from the City of David to the house he had built for her, for he said, "My wife shall not dwell in the house of David king of Israel, because *the places* to which the ark of the LORD has come are holy."

a. **Solomon brought the daughter of Pharaoh up from the City of David to the house he had built for her:** This marriage to a princess of Egypt was the first of Solomon's many unwise marriages (1Ki. 11:1-3).

These

unwise marriages launched the spiritual downfall of Solomon.

b. **My wife shall not dwell in the house of David king of Israel, because the places to which the ark of the LORD has come are**

**holy:** With this, Solomon *admitted* that his wife was an unbeliever and unholy – yet he married her just the same. This led Solomon along a remarkably wicked path (1Ki. 11:4-8).

i. "Is not this a *proof* that he considered his wife to be a *heathen*, and not proper to dwell in a place which had been sanctified?

Solomon had not yet departed from the true God." (Clarke)

ii. "Solomon had, against the law of God, married this and other strange wives, for politic ends no doubt, and as hoping that by his wisdom he could reclaim them, or at least rule them. . . . Howbeit afterwards, overcome by the importunities of his strange wives, he yielded to them shamefully.

Watch, therefore, and beware." (Trapp) iii. "To build a house for Pharaoh's daughter outside the Holy City is to open its gates

sooner or later to Pharaoh's gods." (Morgan) iv. "The blessedness of the marriage tie depends on whether the twain are one in

spirit, in a common love for Christ, and endeavour for his glory. Nothing is more terrible than when either admits in the secrecy of the heart, concerning the other, My husband or my wife cannot accompany me into the holy places where I was reared, and in which my best life finds its home." (Meyer)

2. (12-16) The order of Solomon's administration.

Then Solomon offered burnt offerings to the LORD on the altar of the LORD which he had

built before the vestibule, according to the daily rate, offering according to the commandment of Moses, for the Sabbaths, the New Moons, and the three appointed yearly feasts; the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks, and the Feast of Tabernacles. And, according to the order of David his father, he appointed the divisions of the priests for their service, the Levites for their duties (to praise and serve before the priests) as the duty of each day required, and the gatekeepers by their divisions at each gate; for so David the man of God had commanded. They did not depart from the command of the king to the priests and Levites concerning any matter or concerning the treasuries. Now all the work of

Solomon was well-ordered from the day of the foundation of the house of the LORD until it was finished. So the house of the LORD was completed.

a. **Solomon offered burnt offerings:** In accordance with the commanded morning and evening sacrifices (**according to the daily rate** as mentioned in Num. 28:1-8) Solomon administered the burnt offering for Israel. He also observed the other sacrifices commanded by the Law of Moses.

b. **According to the order of David his father, he appointed the divisions of the priests for their service:** Solomon carried forth the administration for the temple service as it was originally organized by King David (1 Chronicles 24).

c. **Now all the work of Solomon was well-ordered:** This was a reflection of his great wisdom and an answer to his prayer for help in leading the kingdom of Israel (1 Kings 3).

3. (17-18) Solomon's sea trading.

Then Solomon went to Ezion Geber and Elath on the seacoast, in the land of Edom. And Hiram sent him ships by the hand of his servants, and servants who knew the sea. They went with the servants of Solomon to Ophir, and acquired four hundred and fifty talents of gold from there, and brought it to King Solomon.

a. **Then Solomon went to Ezion Geber and**

**Elath on the seacoast:** This was unusual for an Israelite king, because the people of Israel were not known for their accomplishments at sea. Solomon boldly led the people of Israel into new ventures.

i. " 'Ezion Geber and Elath' were ports at the north end of the Gulf of Aqaba that provided a strategic commercial access southward into the Red Sea and beyond." (Payne)

ii. "Solomon probably bore the expenses, and his friend, the Tyrian king, furnished him with expert sailors; for the Jews, at no period of their history, had any skill in maritime affairs, their navigation being confined to the lakes of their own country, from which they could never acquire any nautical skill." (Clarke)

**b. They went with the servants of Solomon to Ophir, and acquired four hundred and**

**fifty talents of gold from there:** It is hard to say with certainty where the land of **Ophir** was.

Some suggest it was in southern Arabia or the eastern coast of Africa. This shows the great enterprise and industriousness of Solomon's administration.

i. "No man knows certainly, to this day, where this *Ophir* was situated. There were two places of this name; one somewhere in

India, beyond the Ganges, and another in Arabia, near the country of the Sabaean, mentioned by Job. 22:24." (Clarke)

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**2** Solomon rebuilt the cities that Hiram had given him and settled Israelites there. **3** Solomon went to Hamath Zobah and seized it. **4** He built up Tadmor in the wilderness and all the storage cities he had built in Hamath. **5** He made upper Beth Horon and lower Beth Horon fortified cities with walls and barred gates, **6** and built up Baalath, all the storage cities that belonged to him, and all the cities where chariots and horses were kept. He built whatever he wanted in Jerusalem, Lebanon, and throughout his entire kingdom.

**7** Now several non-Israelite peoples were left in the land after the conquest of Joshua, including the Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites. **8** Their descendants remained in the land (the Israelites were

unable to wipe them out). Solomon conscripted them for his work crews and they continue in that role to this very day. **9** Solomon did not assign Israelites to these work crews; the Israelites served as his soldiers, officers, charioteers, and commanders of his chariot forces. **10**

These men worked for Solomon as supervisors; there were a total of 250 of them who were in charge of the people.

**11** Solomon moved Pharaoh's daughter up from the City of David to the palace he had built for her, for he said, "My wife must not live in the palace of King David of Israel, for the places where the ark of the LORD has entered are holy."

**12** Then Solomon offered burnt sacrifices to the LORD on the altar of the LORD which he had built in front of the temple's porch. **13** He observed the daily requirements for sacrifices that Moses had specified for Sabbaths, new moon festivals, and the three annual celebrations – the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks, and the Feast of Temporary Shelters. **14** As his father David had decreed, Solomon appointed the divisions of the priests to do their assigned tasks, the Levitical orders to lead worship and help the priests with their daily tasks, and the divisions of the gatekeepers to serve at their assigned gates. This was what David the man of God had ordered.

**15** They did not neglect any detail of the king's orders pertaining to the priests, Levites, and treasuries.

**16** All the work ordered by Solomon was completed, from the day the foundation of the LORD's temple was laid until it was finished; the LORD's temple was completed.

**17** Then Solomon went to Ezion Geber and to Elat on the coast in the land of Edom. **18** Hiram sent him ships and some of his sailors, men who were well acquainted with the sea. They sailed with Solomon's men to Ophir, and took from there 450 talents of gold, which they brought back to King Solomon.

**1** When the queen of Sheba heard about Solomon, she came to challenge him with difficult questions. She arrived in

Jerusalem with a great display of pomp, bringing with her camels carrying spices, a very large quantity of gold, and precious gems. She visited Solomon and discussed with him everything that was on her mind.

Guzik - 2 Chronicles 9:1-31

## **2 Chronicles 9 - More Achievements of Solomon**

A. Solomon hosts the Queen of Sheba.

1. (1-4) The Queen of Sheba comes to Jerusalem.

Now when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon, she came to Jerusalem to test

Solomon with hard questions, *having* a very great retinue, camels that bore spices, gold in

abundance, and precious stones; and when she came to Solomon, she spoke with him about all that was in her heart.

So Solomon answered all her questions; there was nothing so difficult for Solomon that he could not explain it to her.

And when the queen of Sheba had seen the wisdom of Solomon, the house that he had built, the food on his table, the seating of his servants, the service of his waiters and their apparel, his cupbearers and their apparel, and his entryway by which he went up to the house of the LORD, there was no more spirit in her.

a. **The Queen of Sheba:** Sheba (also known as *Sabea*) was where modern day Yemen is today (Southern Arabia). We know from

geography this was a wealthy kingdom, with

much gold, spices, and precious woods. History also tells us that they were known to have

queens as well as kings.

i. This was a long trip - up to about 1,500

miles (2,400 kilometers). She probably came as part of a trade delegation (1Ki. 10:2-5), but there is no doubt that she was highly

motivated to see Solomon and his kingdom.

b. **To test him with hard questions:** Because Solomon was internationally famous for his

wisdom, the Queen of Sheba came to **test** this great wisdom.

c. **Having a very great retinue:** This queen traveled in the manner of queens - with a large royal procession, heavily laden with gifts and goods for trade.

c. **When she came to Solomon, she spoke with him about all that was in her heart:** Solomon's kingdom was famous not only for its material prosperity, but also for his great wisdom. The Queen of Sheba had great - and seemingly difficult - questions, and **Solomon answered all her questions.**

i. "The hard questions were not just riddles, but included difficult diplomatic and ethical questions . . . The test was not an academic exercise but to see if he would be a trustworthy business party and a reliable ally capable of giving help." (Wiseman)

ii. "Bring your hard questions to Christ; He is greater than Solomon." (Meyer)

d. **When the queen of Sheba had seen all the wisdom of Solomon, the house that he had built, the food on his table . . . there was no more spirit in her:** This Queen was obviously familiar with the world of royal

splendor and luxury. Yet she was completely overwhelmed by the wisdom of Solomon and the glory of his kingdom.

i. "What happened to the queen of Sheba is a natural and not an uncommon effect which will be produced in a delicate sensible mind at the sight of rare and extraordinary productions of art." (Clarke)

2. (5-8) The reaction of the Queen of Sheba.

Then she said to the king: "*It was* a true report which I heard in my own land about your words and your wisdom. However I did not believe their words until I came and saw with my

own eyes; and indeed the half of the greatness of your wisdom was not told me. You exceed the fame of which I heard. Happy *are* your men and happy *are* these your servants, who stand continually before you and hear your wisdom! Blessed be the LORD your God, who delighted in you, setting you on His throne *to be* king for the LORD your God! Because your God has loved Israel, to establish them forever, therefore He made you king over them, to do justice and righteousness."

a. **Indeed the half of the greatness of your wisdom was not told me:** The Queen of Sheba heard wonderful things about Solomon

and his kingdom, but upon seeing it with her own eyes she realized it was far greater than she had heard.

b. **Happy are your men and happy are**

**these your servants:** It is a joyful thing to serve a great, wise, and rich king. If it was a happy thing to serve Solomon, it is a much

happier thing to serve Jesus.

c. **Blessed be the LORD your God, who**

**delighted in you:** This is an example of what God wanted to do for Israel under the promises of the Old Covenant. God promised Israel that if they obeyed under the Old Covenant, He would bless them so tremendously that the world would notice and give glory to the Lord GOD of Israel.

i. *Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments*

*which I command you today, that the LORD*

*your God will set you high above all nations of the earth. . . .*

*Then all peoples of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of the LORD, and they shall be afraid of you. (Deu. 28:1, 10)*

ii. God wanted to reach the nations through an obedient and blessed Israel. If Israel did not obey, then God would speak to the

nations through a thoroughly disciplined Israel.

d. **Blessed be the LORD your God:** It is fair to ask if this was a true confession of faith, expressing allegiance to the God of Israel.

Taken in their context, these may not be more than the queen's response to the astonishing blessing evident in Solomon's Jerusalem.

i. "Her statement about the blessings of the Lord on Israel and Solomon in verse 9 were

no more than a polite reference to

Solomon's God . . . There is no record that she accepted Solomon's God, who was so

majestically edified by the temple." (Dilday) ii. "*Praise to the LORD* implies recognition of Israel's national God and need not

necessarily be an expression of personal faith." (Wiseman)

iii. If we take the Queen of Sheba as an example of a *seeker*, we see that Solomon impressed her with his wealth and splendor, and also impressed her personally. But she

returned home without an evident expression of faith in the God of Israel. This shows that impressing seekers with facilities and programs and organization and

professionalism isn't enough.

iv. Regardless of the result of her search, we can admire her seeking.

- She came from a great distance.
- She came with gifts to offer.
- She came to question and to learn.
- She came and saw the riches of the king.
- She came for an extended period.
- She came telling all that was on her

heart.

v. Jesus used the Queen of Sheba as an example of a seeker: *The queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a greater than Solomon is here.* (Mat. 12:42) If the Queen of Sheba sought Solomon and the splendor of his kingdom so diligently, *how much more* should people today seek Jesus and the glory of His Kingdom. She will certainly also rise up in judgment with this generation.

**e. Because the LORD has loved Israel forever . . . therefore He made you king over them:**

This statement is especially meaningful because Solomon was not

necessarily the most logical successor of his father David. There were several sons of David born before Solomon. "It was God's special act to make him king rather than his elder brother."

(Poole)

3. (9-12) An exchange of gifts.

And she gave the king one hundred and twenty talents of gold, spices in great abundance, and precious stones; there never were any spices such as those the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon. Also, the servants of Hiram and the servants of Solomon, who brought gold from Ophir, brought algum wood and precious stones.

And the king made walkways *of* the algum wood for the house of the LORD and for the king's house, also harps and stringed instruments for singers; and there were none such *as these* seen before in the land of Judah. Now King Solomon gave to the queen of Sheba all she desired, whatever she asked, *much more* than she had brought to the king. So she turned and went to her own country, she and her servants.

a. **There never were any spices such as those the queen of Sheba gave to King**

**Solomon:** She came from a region rich in spices and skilled in the processing of spices.

b. **Solomon gave to the queen of Sheba all she desired:** Solomon would not allow the Queen of Sheba to give him more than he gave back to her. This description of Solomon's

measure of generosity to the Queen of Sheba also describes the measure of God's generosity towards us.

i. According to tradition - fanciful stories, perhaps - the Queen of Sheba wanted a son

by Solomon, and he obliged her. Her child was named Menilek, and he became the ancestor of all subsequent Ethiopian monarchs.

B. Solomon's great wealth.

1. (13-14) Solomon's yearly income.

The weight of gold that came to Solomon yearly was six hundred and sixty-six talents of gold, besides *what* the traveling merchants and traders brought. And all the kings of Arabia and

governors of the country brought gold and silver to Solomon.

a. **Six hundred and sixty-six talents of**

**gold:** This is a vast amount of gold, which came to Solomon **yearly**. One commentator sets the value of the 666 talents of gold at

\$281,318,400. This speaks not only to the great wealth of Solomon, but it also makes him the only other person in the Bible associated with the number 666.

i. The other Biblical connection to 666 is the end-times world dictator and opponent of

God and His people often known as the Antichrist (Rev. 13:18). In fact, the

Revelation passage specifically says that the number 666 is *the number of a man*, and the *man* may be Solomon.

ii. This isn't to say that Solomon was the Antichrist or that the coming Antichrist will be some weird reincarnation of Solomon.

But it may indicate that the Antichrist may not be someone purely evil from the very beginning. Instead, he may be like Solomon - a good man corrupted.

**b. Besides what the traveling merchants**

**and traders brought:** Solomon received *more* than 666 talents of gold a year. The 666 talents was just his beginning salary.

i. The writer of gives us a subtle warning signal here. He assumes that we know of the instructions for future kings of Israel in Deu. 17:14-20. He assumes we know verse

17 of that passage, which says: *nor shall he greatly multiply silver and gold for himself.*

God blessed Solomon with great riches, but Solomon allowed that blessing to turn into a danger because he disobediently multiplied silver and gold for himself.

2. (15-28) Examples of Solomon's wealth and prosperity.

And King Solomon made two hundred large shields of hammered gold; six hundred *shekels* of hammered gold went into each shield. *He* also *made* three hundred shields of hammered gold; three hundred *shekels* of gold went into each shield. The king put them in the House of the Forest of Lebanon. Moreover the king made a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with pure gold. The throne *had* six steps, with a footstool of gold, *which were* fastened to the throne; there were armrests on either side of the place of the seat, and two lions stood beside the armrests.

Twelve lions stood there, one on each side of the six steps; nothing like *this* had been made for any *other* kingdom. All

King Solomon's drinking vessels *were* gold, and all the vessels of the House of the Forest of Lebanon *were* pure gold.

Not *one was* silver, for this was accounted as nothing in the days of Solomon. For the king's ships went to Tarshish with the servants of Hiram. Once every three years the merchant ships came, bringing gold, silver, ivory, apes, and monkeys. So King Solomon surpassed all the

kings of the earth in riches and wisdom. And all the kings of the earth sought the presence of Solomon to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart. Each man brought his present: articles of silver and gold, garments, armor, spices, horses, and mules, at a set rate year by year. Solomon had four thousand stalls for horses and chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen

whom he stationed in the chariot cities and with the king at Jerusalem. So he reigned over all the kings from the River to the land of the Philistines, as far as the border of Egypt. The king made silver *as common* in Jerusalem as stones, and he made cedar trees as abundant as the sycamores which *are* in the lowland. And they brought horses to Solomon from Egypt and from all lands.

**a. Two hundred large shields of hammered gold . . . three hundred shields of**

**hammered gold:** These shields made beautiful displays in the House of the Forest of Lebanon (1Ki. 10:17), but they were of no use in battle.

Gold was too heavy and too soft to be used as a metal for effective shields. This shows Solomon had the *image* of a warrior king, but without the *substance*.

i. According to Dilday, each large shield was worth about \$120,000. The smaller shields were worth \$30,000. \$33 million was invested in gold ceremonial shields

**b. Not one was silver, for this was accounted as nothing in the days of**

**Solomon:** This was a statement of wealth. If taken seriously, it shows the tremendous abundance of Solomon's kingdom. Truly, **King Solomon surpassed all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom**, and the promises of Deu. 28:1-14 were fulfilled in his reign: *The LORD will open to you His good treasure, the heavens, to give the rain to your land in its season, and to bless all the work of your hand. You shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow.* (Deu. 28:12) c. **All the earth sought the presence of**

**Solomon to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart:** This was another fulfillment of the promises of Deuteronomy 28: *And the LORD will make you the head and not the tail; you shall be above only, and not be beneath, if you heed the commandments of the LORD your God* (Deu. 28:13).

d. **The king made silver as common in**

**Jerusalem as stones:** When we think of Solomon's great wealth, we also consider that he originally did not set his heart upon riches.

He deliberately asked for wisdom to lead the people of God *instead* of riches or fame. God promised to *also* give Solomon riches and fame, and God fulfilled His promise.

i. We also consider that Solomon gave an eloquent testimony to the vanity of riches as the preacher in the Book of Ecclesiastes. He powerfully showed that there was no

ultimate satisfaction through materialism.

We don't have to be as rich as Solomon to learn the same lesson.

e. **The brought horses to Solomon from**

**Egypt and all lands:** At the end of this great description of Solomon's wealth and splendor, we have the sound of this dark note. This was in direct disobedience to Deu. 17:16, which said to the Kings of Israel: *But he shall not multiply*

*horses for himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses, for the LORD has said to you, "You shall not return that way again."*

4. (29-31) The end of Solomon's reign.

Now the rest of the acts of Solomon, first and last, *are* they not written in the book of Nathan the prophet, in the prophecy of Ahijah the

Shilonite, and in the visions of Iddo the seer concerning Jeroboam the son of Nebat? Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel forty years.

Then Solomon rested with his fathers, and was buried in the City of David his father. And Rehoboam his son reigned in his place.

a. **Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel forty years:** Many commentators believe that Solomon began his reign when he was about 20 years old. This means that Solomon did not live a particularly long life. This means that the promise made in 1Ki. 3:14 was not fulfilled to Solomon, because of his disobedience.

i. *So if you walk in My ways, to keep My statutes and My commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days.* (1Ki. 3:14)

ii. "When we consider the excess in which he lived, and the criminal passions which he must have indulged among his thousand wives, and their idolatrous and impure worship, this life was as long as could be reasonably expected." (Clarke)

b. **Then Solomon rested with his fathers:** This does not necessarily mean that Solomon died a saved man. It is a familiar phrase used in 1 and 2 Kings (used 25 times) and was used of such wicked kings as Ahab (1Ki. 22:40). It simply means that Solomon passed to the world beyond. We cannot say with certainty that he is in heaven.

i. "Yielding to certain lower things of his nature, he became a slave to them, and dragged down his nation with him. So long as he remained on the throne, the people were solaced and drugged by the material magnificence; but underneath, the spirit of rebellion and revolt was at work, ready to break out into open manifestation directly he was removed." (Morgan)

ii. "The story is perhaps one of the most striking illustrations of the fact that opportunity and privilege, even God bestowed, are not enough in themselves to assure full realization." (Morgan)

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**2** Solomon answered all her questions; there was no question too complex for the king. **3** When the queen of Sheba saw for herself Solomon's extensive wisdom, the palace he had built, **4** the food in his banquet hall, his servants and attendants in their robes, his cupbearers in their robes, and his burnt sacrifices which he presented in the LORD's temple, she was amazed. **5** She said to the king, "The report I heard in my own country about your wise sayings and insight was true! **6** I did not believe these things until I came and saw them with my own eyes.

Indeed, I didn't hear even half the story! Your wisdom surpasses what was reported to me. **7** Your attendants, who stand before you at all times and hear your wise sayings, are truly happy! **8** May the LORD your God be praised because he favored you by placing you on his throne as the one ruling on his behalf! Because of your God's love for Israel and his lasting commitment to them, he made you king over them so you could make just and right decisions." **9** She gave the king 120 talents of gold and a very large quantity of spices and precious gems. The quantity of spices the

queen of Sheba gave King Solomon has never been matched. **10** (Hiram's servants, aided by Solomon's servants, brought gold from Ophir, as well as fine timber and precious gems. **11** With the timber the king made steps for the LORD's temple and royal palace as well as stringed instruments for the musicians. No one had seen anything like them in the land of Judah prior to that.) **12** King Solomon gave the queen of Sheba everything she requested, more than what she had brought him. Then she left and returned to her homeland with her attendants.

**13** Solomon received 666 talents of gold per year, **14** besides what he collected from the merchants and traders. All the Arabian kings and the governors of the land also brought gold and silver to Solomon. **15** King Solomon made two hundred large shields of hammered gold; 600 measures of hammered gold were used for each shield. **16** He also made three hundred small shields of hammered gold; 300 measures of gold were used for each of those shields. The king placed them in the Palace of the Lebanon Forest.

**17** The king made a large throne decorated with ivory and overlaid it with pure gold. **18** There were six steps leading up to the throne, and a gold footstool was attached to the throne. The throne had two armrests with a statue of a lion standing on each side. **19** There were twelve statues of lions on the six steps, one lion at each end of each step. There was nothing like it in any other kingdom.

**20** All of King Solomon's cups were made of gold, and all the household items in the Palace of the Lebanon Forest were made of pure gold. There were no silver items, for silver was not considered very valuable in Solomon's time.

**21** The king had a fleet of large merchant ships manned by Hiram's men that sailed the sea. Once every three years the fleet came into port with cargoes of gold, silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks.

**22** King Solomon was wealthier and wiser than any of the kings of the earth. **23** All the kings of the earth wanted to visit Solomon to see him display his God-given wisdom.

**24** Year after year visitors brought their gifts, which included items of silver, items of gold, clothes, perfume, spices, horses, and mules.

**25** Solomon had 4,000 stalls for his chariot horses and 12,000 horses. He kept them in assigned cities and in Jerusalem. **26** He ruled all the kingdoms from the Euphrates River to the land of the Philistines as far as the border of Egypt. **27** The king made silver as plentiful in Jerusalem as stones; cedar was as plentiful as sycamore fig trees are in the lowlands. **28** Solomon acquired horses from Egypt and from all the lands.

**29** The rest of the events of Solomon's reign, from start to finish, are recorded in the Annals of Nathan the Prophet, the Prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and the Vision of Iddo the Seer pertaining to Jeroboam son of Nebat. **30** Solomon ruled over all Israel from Jerusalem for forty years. **31** Then Solomon passed away and was buried in the city of his father David. His son Rehoboam replaced him as king.

**1** Rehoboam traveled to Shechem, for all Israel had gathered in Shechem to make Rehoboam king.

Guzik - 2 Chronicles 10:1-19

### ***2 Chronicles 10 - The Reign of Rehoboam***

A. Rehoboam and the nation at Shechem.

1. (1-5) The elders of Israel offer Rehoboam the throne of Israel.

And Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all Israel had gone to Shechem to make him king. So it happened, when Jeroboam the son of Nebat

heard *it* (he was in Egypt, where he had fled from the presence of King Solomon), that

Jeroboam returned from Egypt. Then they sent for him and called him. And Jeroboam and all Israel came and spoke to Rehoboam, saying,

"Your father made our yoke heavy; now therefore, lighten the burdensome service of your father and his heavy yoke which he put on us, and we will serve you."

So he said to them,

"Come back to me after three days." And the people departed.

**a. Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all Israel had gone to Shechem to make him**

**king:** This was a logical continuation of the Davidic dynasty. David was succeeded by his son Solomon, and now **Rehoboam**, the son of Solomon, was assumed to be the next king.

i. Rehoboam was the only son of Solomon that we know by name. Solomon had 1000 wives and concubines, yet we read of one son he had to bear up his name, and he was a fool. This demonstrates that sin is a bad way of building up a family.

ii. "It is difficult to believe that he had no other sons; yet it is a fact that Rehoboam is the only one mentioned (1Ch. 3:10)." (Knapp)

iii. **Shechem** was a city with a rich history.

Abraham worshipped there (Gen. 12:6).

Jacob built an altar and purchased land

there (Gen. 33:18-20). Joseph was buried

there (Jos. 24:32). It was also the

geographical center of the northern tribes.

All in all, it showed that Rehoboam was in a position of weakness, having to meet the ten northern tribes on *their* territory, instead of demanding that representatives come to Jerusalem.

**b. When Jeroboam the son of Nebat heard**

**it:** Jeroboam was mentioned previously in 1Ki.

11:26-40. God told him through a prophet that he would rule over a portion of a divided Israel.

Naturally, Jeroboam was interested in Solomon's successor. He was specifically part of the group of elders that addressed Rehoboam.

**c. Your father made our yoke heavy; now therefore, lighten the burdensome service of your father:** Solomon was a great king, but he *took* a lot from the people. The people of Israel wanted relief from the heavy taxation and forced service of Solomon's reign, and they offered allegiance to Rehoboam if he agreed to this.

i. God warned Israel about this in 1Sa. 8:10-19, when through Samuel He spoke of what a king would *take* from Israel. After the warning the people still wanted a king, and now they knew what it was like to be ruled

by a *taking* king.

ii. Sadly, the elders of Israel made no *spiritual* demand or request on Rehoboam. Seemingly, the gross idolatry and apostasy of Solomon didn't bother them at all.

2. (6-7) The counsel from Rehoboam's older advisors.

Then King Rehoboam consulted the elders who stood before his father Solomon while he still lived, saying, "How do you advise *me* to answer these people?" And they spoke to him, saying, "If you are kind to these people, and please them, and speak good words to them, they will be your servants forever."

**a. Rehoboam consulted the elders who stood before his father Solomon while he still lived:** Wisely, Rehoboam asked the counsel of these older, experienced men. They seemed to advise Solomon well, so it was fitting that Rehoboam asked for their advice.

**b. If you are kind to these people . . . they will be your servants forever:** The elders knew that Rehoboam was not Solomon, and

could not expect the same from the people that Solomon did. Rehoboam had to relate to the people based on who *he* was, not on who his father was. If he showed kindness and a servant's heart to the people, they would love and serve him forever. This was good advice.

3. (8-11) The counsel from Rehoboam's younger advisors.

But he rejected the advice which the elders had given him, and consulted the young men who had grown up with him, who stood before him.

And he said to them, "What advice do you give?

How should we answer this people who have spoken to me, saying, 'Lighten the yoke which your father put on us'?" Then the young men who had grown up with him spoke to him,

saying, "Thus you should speak to the people who have spoken to you, saying, 'Your father made our yoke heavy, but you make *it* lighter on us'; thus you shall say to them: 'My little *finger* shall be thicker than my father's waist! And now, whereas my father put a heavy yoke on you, I will add to your yoke; my father chastised you with whips, but I *will* chastise you with scourges!'"

**a. But he rejected the advice which the elders had given him, and consulted the**

**young men:** *Before* Rehoboam ever consulted with the younger men **he rejected the advice** of the elders.

i. This is a common phenomenon today -

what some call "advice shopping." The idea is that you keep asking different people for advice until you find someone who will tell you what you want to hear. This is an unwise and ungodly way to get counsel. It is better to have a few trusted counselors you will listen to even when they tell you what you don't want to hear.

**b. And consulted the young men who had**

**grown up with him:** These men were much more likely to tell Rehoboam what he already thought. By turning to those

likely to think just as he did, it shows that Rehoboam only asked for advice for the sake of appearances

i. Their unwise advice shows the wisdom of seeking counsel from those *outside* our immediate situation and context. Sometimes an outsider can see things more clearly than those who share our same experiences.

ii. "The 'young men' to who Rehoboam preferred to turn were probably some of Solomon's many sons, rendered callous by upbringing in the luxurious harem and court at Jerusalem." (Payne)

**c. And now, whereas my father put a heavy yoke on you, I will add to your**

**yoke:** The younger men offered the opposite advice to the elders. They suggested an

adversarial approach, one that would make Rehoboam more feared than Solomon was.

i. Solomon asked a lot of Israel, in both taxes and service. Yet we don't have the impression that Israel followed Solomon out of fear, but out of a sense of shared vision and purpose. They believed in what Solomon

wanted to do, and were willing to sacrifice to accomplish it. Rehoboam did not appeal to

any sense of shared vision and purpose - he simply wanted the people to follow his orders out of the fear of a tyrant.

ii. "He attempted to continue the despotism of his father, though he lacked his father's refinement and ability to fascinate." (Morgan)

iii. "With a dozen rash words, Rehoboam, the bungling dictator, opened the door for four hundred years of strife, weakness, and, eventually, the destruction of the entire nation." (Dilday)

iv. **My little finger shall be thicker than my father's waist!** A targum translates this, "My weakness shall be stronger than the might of my father." (Clarke)

4. (12-15) Rehoboam answers Jeroboam and the elders of Israel harshly.

So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam on the third day, as the king had directed, saying, "Come back to me the third day." Then the king answered them roughly. King Rehoboam rejected the advice of the elders, and he spoke to them according to the advice of the young men, saying, "My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to it; my father chastised you with whips, but I *will chastise you* with scourges!" So the king did not listen to the people; for the turn *of events* was from God, that the LORD might fulfill His word, which He had spoken by the hand of Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

a. **So the king did not listen to the people:** In this case, Rehoboam clearly should have

listened to the people. This is not to say that a leader should always lead by popular vote, but a leader needs the wisdom to know when what

the people want is best for them.

i. Rehoboam was a fool. Ironically, his father Solomon worried about losing all he worked

for under a foolish successor: *Then I hated all my labor in which I had toiled under the sun, because I must leave it to the man who will come after me. And who knows whether he will be wise or a fool? Yet he will rule over all my labor in which I toiled and in which I have shown myself wise under the sun. This also is vanity.* (Ecc. 2:18-19) ii. "Rehoboam was

a fool; and through his folly he lost his kingdom. He is not the only example on record: the *Stuarts* lost the realm of England much in the same way." (Clarke)

iii. "Livy saith, when a state is ripe for ruin, all wholesome counsels are fatally but foolishly slighted." (Trapp)

b. **For the turn of events was from God:** God managed this whole series of events, but He did not *make* Rehoboam take this unwise and sinful action. God simply left Rehoboam alone and allowed him to make the critical errors his sinful heart *wanted* to make.

i. "It seemed to be altogether a piece of human folly and passion; but now we are suddenly brought into the presence of God, and told that beneath the plottings and plannings of man He was carrying out His eternal purpose. . . . He makes the wrath of man to praise Him, and weaves the malignant work of Satan into his plans." (Meyer)

ii. "Notice also, dear friends, that God is in events which are produced by the sin and the stupidity of men. This breaking up of the kingdom of Solomon into two parts was the result of Solomon's sin and Rehoboam's folly; yet God was in it: "This thing is from me, saith the Lord." God had nothing to do with the sin or the folly, but in some way which we can never explain, in a mysterious way in which we are to believe without hesitation, God was in it all." (Spurgeon) B. The revolt against Rehoboam.

1. (16-17) Jeroboam leads those leaving Rehoboam's rule.

Now when all Israel *saw* that the king did not listen to them, the people answered the king, saying: "What share have we in David? *We have* no inheritance in the son of Jesse. Every man to your tents, O Israel! Now see to your own house, O David!" So all Israel departed to their tents. But Rehoboam

reigned over the children of Israel who dwelt in the cities of Judah.

a. **What share have we in David?**

Rehoboam's foolishness made Israel reject not only Rehoboam, but also the entire dynasty of David. They rejected the descendants of Israel's greatest king.

b. **Rehoboam reigned over the children of Israel who dwelt in the cities of Judah:** This signals the division of the twelve tribes into two kingdoms; a northern kingdom made up of 10 tribes and a southern kingdom made up of **Judah** and Benjamin.

2. (18-19) Israel rebels against the house of David.

Then King Rehoboam sent Hadoram, who *was* in charge of revenue; but the children of Israel stoned him with stones, and he died. Therefore King Rehoboam mounted *his* chariot in haste to flee to Jerusalem. So Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David to this day.

a. **King Rehoboam sent Hadoram, who was in charge of the revenue; but all Israel stoned him with stones:** Apparently,

Rehoboam did not take the rebellions seriously until this happened. When his chief tax collector was murdered, he knew that the ten tribes were serious about their rebellion.

i. Hadoram was the wrong man for

Rehoboam to send. He was famous for his

harsh policy of forced labor (1Ki. 4:6 and

5:14). "He was probably one of the most hated figures in the land, an embodiment of oppression." (Payne) Rehoboam

probably sent Adoram because he wanted to make

good on his promise to punish those who

opposed him. His tough-guy policy didn't work.

ii. "Rehoboam makes one pathetic effort to restore unity, perfectly illustrating the poverty of his policy." (Selman)

**b. So Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David to this day:**

From this point on in the history of Israel, the name

"Israel" referred to the 10 northern tribes and the name "Judah" referred to the southern tribes of Benjamin and Judah.

i. There was a long-standing tension between the ten northern tribes and the combined group of Judah and Benjamin.

There were two earlier rebellions along this line of potential division, in the days after Absalom's rebellion (2Sa. 19:40-43), which

developed into the rebellion of Sheba (2Sa. 20:1-2).

ii. "Rehoboam ought to have been thankful that God's love to David had left him even two tribes." (Knapp)

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**2** When Jeroboam son of Nebat heard the news, he was still in Egypt, where he had fled from King Solomon.

Jeroboam returned from Egypt. **3** They sent for him and Jeroboam and all Israel came and spoke to Rehoboam, saying, **4** "Your father made us work too hard! Now if you lighten the demands he made and don't make us work as hard, we will serve you." **5** He said to them, "Go away for three days, then return to me." So the people went away.

**6** King Rehoboam consulted with the older advisers who had served his father Solomon when he had been alive. He asked them, "How do you advise me to answer these people?" **7** They said to him, "If you are fair to these people, grant their request, and are cordial to them, they will be your servants from this time forward." **8** But Rehoboam rejected their advice and consulted the young advisers who served him, with whom he had grown up. **9**

He asked them, “How do you advise me to respond to these people who said to me, ‘Lessen the demands your father placed on us?’” **10** The young advisers with whom Rehoboam had grown up said to him, “Say this to these people who have said to you, ‘Your father made us work hard, but now lighten our burden’ – say this to them: ‘I am a lot harsher than my father! **11** My father imposed heavy demands on you; I will make them even heavier. My father punished you with ordinary whips; I will punish you with whips that really sting your flesh.’”

**12** Jeroboam and all the people reported to Rehoboam on the third day, just as the king had ordered when he said, “Return to me on the third day.” **13** The king responded to the people harshly. He rejected the advice of the older men **14** and followed the advice of the younger ones. He said, “My father imposed heavy demands on you; I will make them even heavier. My father punished you with ordinary whips; I will punish you with whips that really sting your flesh.” **15** The king refused to listen to the people, because God was instigating this turn of events so that he might bring to pass the prophetic announcement he had made through Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam son of Nebat.

**16** When all Israel saw that the king refused to listen to them, the people answered the king, “We have no portion in David – no share in the son of Jesse! Return to your homes, O Israel! Now, look after your own dynasty, O David!” So all Israel returned to their homes. **17**

(Rehoboam continued to rule over the Israelites who lived in the cities of Judah.) **18** King Rehoboam sent Hadoram, the supervisor of the work crews, out after them, but the Israelites stoned him to death. King Rehoboam managed to jump into his chariot and escape to Jerusalem. **19** So Israel has been in rebellion against the Davidic dynasty to this very day.

**1** When Rehoboam arrived in Jerusalem, he summoned 180,000 skilled warriors from Judah and Benjamin to attack

Israel and restore the kingdom to Rehoboam.

Guzik - 2 Chronicles 11:1-23

### ***2 Chronicles 11 - The Defection of the Levites***

A. The reign of Rehoboam, the son of Solomon.

1. (1-4) A prophet prevents a civil war, allowing the northern tribes to secede.

Now when Rehoboam came to Jerusalem, he assembled from the house of Judah and Benjamin one hundred and eighty thousand chosen *men* who were warriors, to fight against Israel, that he might restore the kingdom to Rehoboam. But the word of the LORD came to

Shemaiah the man of God, saying, "Speak to Rehoboam the son of Solomon, king of Judah, and to all Israel in Judah and Benjamin, saying,

'Thus says the LORD: "You shall not go up or fight against your brethren! Let every man return to his house, for this thing is from Me." ' "

Therefore they obeyed the words of the LORD, and turned back from attacking Jeroboam.

a. **When Rehoboam came to Jerusalem, he assembled from the house of Judah and**

# Benjamin one hundred and eighty

**thousand chosen men who were warriors:** This was the time of Jeroboam's rebellion against the house of David. Rehoboam intended to keep the kingdom united by force.

**b. To fight against the house of Israel, that he might restore the kingdom to Rehoboam:** Rehoboam intended to make war against the seceding tribes of Israel, but God spoke through a prophet and stopped him. To his credit - or perhaps due to a lack of courage -

Rehoboam listened to God's word through

**Shemaiah the man of God.**

i. "Here is one Shemaiah, - some of you never heard of him before, perhaps you will never hear of him again; he appears once in this history, and then he vanishes; he comes, and he goes, - only fancy this one

man constraining to peace a hundred and eighty thousand chosen men, warriors ready

to fight against the house of Israel, by giving to them in very plain, unpolished words, the simple command of God . . .

Why have we not such power? Peradventure, brethren, we do not always speak in the name of the

Lord, or speak God's Word as God's Word. If we are simply tellers out of our own thoughts, why should men mind us?" (Spurgeon)

2. (5-12) Rehoboam turns his attention to defense.

So Rehoboam dwelt in Jerusalem, and built cities for defense in Judah. And he built Bethlehem, Etam, Tekoa, Beth Zur, Sochoh, Adullam, Gath, Mareshah, Ziph, Adoraim, Lachish, Azekah, Zorah, Aijalon, and Hebron, which are in Judah and Benjamin, fortified cities. And he fortified the strongholds, and put captains in them, and stores of food, oil, and wine.

Also in every city *he put* shields and spears, and made them very strong, having Judah and Benjamin on his side.

a. **Built cities for defense in Judah:** Stung by the civil war that more than halved his kingdom, Rehoboam set his focus on **defense**, building a series of fortified cities for defense.

i. "The fifteen cities that Ezra lists lie towards Judah's southern and western borders. Their choice seems to have been

dictated by threat from Egypt (12:2-4)." (Payne)

b. **In every city he put shields and spears, and made them very strong:** Rehoboam sought to strengthen his kingdom and

succeeded to some extent. Yet overall he neglected the spiritual things necessary to strengthen his kingdom.

i. "In these places he laid up stores of provisions, not only to enable *them* to endure a siege; but also that they might be able, from their situation, to supply desolate places."

(Clarke) B. The defection of the priests, Levites, and the godly remnant from Israel to Judah.

1. (13-16) The godly of the northern kingdom migrate to the southern kingdom.

And from all their territories the priests and the Levites who *were* in all Israel took their stand with him. For the Levites left their common-lands and their possessions and came to Judah and Jerusalem, for Jeroboam and his sons had rejected them from serving as priests to the LORD. Then he appointed for himself priests for the high places, for the demons, and the calf idols which he had made. And after *the Levites left*, those from all the tribes of Israel, such as set their heart to seek the LORD God of Israel, came to Jerusalem to sacrifice to the LORD God of their fathers.

a. **And from all their territories the priests and the Levites who were in all Israel took their stand with**

**him:** This was in response to the state-sponsored idolatry of Jeroboam, the first king of the northern kingdom (1Ki. 12:26-33). These godly servants of the LORD refused to live in a kingdom where worshipping God as He commanded was against the law.

i. "They would not suffer them to instruct and assist the Israelites in the worship and service of God, nor to go up to Jerusalem to worship in their courses; and these priests would not join with them in the worship of calves, as they were desired and

commanded to do; and therefore they willingly forsook all their patrimonies and possessions for God's sake." (Poole)

ii. "He attempted to adapt religion in the interest of the State, and thus destroyed both." (Morgan)

**b. For the Levites left their common-lands and their possessions and came to Judah and Jerusalem:** This meant that since the days of Jeroboam the southern kingdom of Judah was made up not only of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, but also of a godly remnant from all the ten northern tribes.

i. Spiritually speaking, Israel was struck twice - by the ungodly religion of Jeroboam and by the departure of the godly and faithful. There were few godly people left in the northern kingdom.

ii. "Viewed even as a stroke of policy, this ejection of the Lord's priests and Levites was a blunder. They went over in a body, almost, to Jeroboam's rival, and thereby 'strengthened the kingdom of Judah.'

" (Knapp)

iii. "Note that the laymen *followed* the Levites to Jerusalem . . . it stresses again the people's unity, with every tribe being represented." (Selman)

iv. This migration of the godly did not end in the days of Jeroboam. "The expression 'Jeroboam and his sons,' i.e., his successors, indicates that migrations by the faithful to Judah

was a process that continued down through the years." (Payne)

v. "This remnant of loyal souls, gathered out of all the tribes, left their own country and went to Judah. . . . Exodus and emigration have very often been the ways of God's advance in the course of time. Such

movements have always been sacrificial, but they have been deliverances." (Morgan) c. **He appointed for himself priests for the high places, for the demons, and the calf idols which he had made:** 1 Kings tells us about the **calf idols**, which were *false representations* of the *true God*. However, we also learn here that Jeroboam established altars **for the demons** (that is, the pagan gods of Canaan).

i. "So he erected two sorts of high places, some for Baal, and some for the true God, whom he pretended and would be thought

to worship in and by the calves." (Poole) 2. (17) The true strength of Judah.

So they strengthened the kingdom of Judah, and made Rehoboam the son of Solomon strong for three years, because they walked in the way of David and Solomon for three years.

a. **So they strengthened the kingdom of**

**Judah:** This was the true strength of Judah; the godly men and women from the northern kingdom who migrated to the southern kingdom to live there.

b. **Because they walked in the way of**

**David and Solomon for three years:** Sadly, this period did not last longer because of Rehoboam's general bent towards ungodliness.

3. (18-23) The family of Rehoboam.

Then Rehoboam took for himself as wife

Mahalath the daughter of Jerimoth the son of David, *and of* Abihail the daughter of Eliah the son of Jesse. And she bore him children: Jeush, Shamariah, and Zaham. After her he took Maacah the granddaughter of Absalom; and she bore

him Abijah, Attai, Ziza, and Shelomith. Now Rehoboam loved Maachah the granddaughter of Absalom more than all his wives and his concubines; for he took eighteen wives and sixty concubines, and begot twenty-eight sons and sixty daughters. And Rehoboam appointed Abijah the son of Maachah as chief, *to be* leader among his brothers; for he *intended* to make him king.

He dealt wisely, and dispersed some of his sons throughout all the territories of Judah and Benjamin, to every fortified city; and he gave them provisions in abundance. He also sought many wives *for them*.

**a. For he took eighteen wives and sixty**

**concubines:** Rehoboam obviously did not learn from his father Solomon's error. Though he had far fewer wives and concubines (he was probably less able to support as many), he still had a heart that broke the command of Deu.

17:17.

i. "By taking 'eighteen wives' Rehoboam willfully disregarded the law of God, both in respect to kingly abuse (Deu. 17:17) and in respect to polygamous marriage . . . not to mention his disregard of the disastrous precedent set by his father, Solomon, from which he should have learned caution." (Payne)

ii. "He was, however, the son of his father; and, even in the years of peace and prosperity, the animal nature came out in the multiplicity of wives and concubines, until he had practically established, as did his father, a harem on the pattern of the corrupt kings around him." (Morgan)

**b. Rehoboam appointed Abijah the son of**

**Maachah as chief, to be leader among his brothers:**

This means that he appointed Abijah to be his successor, the crown prince and perhaps for some period of time co-regent.

i. "Abijah certainly was not the *first-born* of Rehoboam; but as he loved Maachah more than any of his wives, so he preferred her

son, probably through his mother's influence." (Clarke)

**c. He dealt wisely, and dispersed some of his sons throughout all the territories of Judah and Benjamin:**

This was wise because it kept his many sons apart and less likely to form an alliance against Abijah, who might be considered an illegitimate successor to the throne.

i. "It was true policy to disperse his own sons through the different provinces who were not likely to form any league with

Jeroboam against their father." (Clarke)

© 2006 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** But the LORD told Shemaiah the prophet, **3** "Say this to King Rehoboam son of Solomon of Judah and to all the Israelites in Judah and Benjamin, **4** 'The LORD says this: "Do not attack and make war with your brothers. Each of you go home, for I have caused this to happen.'"" They obeyed the LORD and called off the attack against Jeroboam. **5** Rehoboam lived in Jerusalem; he built up these fortified cities throughout Judah: **6** Bethlehem, Etam, Tekoa, **7** Beth Zur, Soco, Adullam, **8** Gath, Mareshah, Ziph, **9** Adoraim, Lachish, Azekah, **10** Zorah, Aijalon, and Hebron. These were the fortified cities in Judah and Benjamin. **11** He fortified these cities and placed officers in them, as well as storehouses of food, olive oil, and wine.

**12** In each city there were shields and spears; he strongly fortified them. Judah and Benjamin belonged to him.

**13** The priests and Levites who lived throughout Israel supported him, no matter where they resided. **14** The Levites even left their pasturelands and their property behind and came to Judah and Jerusalem, for Jeroboam and his sons prohibited them from serving as the LORD's priests.

**15** Jeroboam appointed his own priests to serve at the

worship centers and to lead in the worship of the goat idols and calf idols he had made. **16** Those among all the Israelite tribes who were determined to worship the LORD

God of Israel followed them to Jerusalem to sacrifice to the LORD God of their ancestors. **17** They supported the kingdom of Judah and were loyal to Rehoboam son of Solomon for three years; they followed the edicts of David and Solomon for three years.

**18** Rehoboam married Mahalath the daughter of David's son Jerimoth and of Abihail, the daughter of Jesse's son Eliab. **19** She bore him sons named Jeush, Shemariah, and Zham. **20** He later married Maacah the daughter of Absalom. She bore to him Abijah, Attai, Ziza, and Shelomith. **21** Rehoboam loved Maacah daughter of Absalom more than his other wives and concubines. He had eighteen wives and sixty concubines; he fathered twenty-eight sons and sixty daughters.

**22** Rehoboam appointed Abijah son of Maacah as the leader over his brothers, for he intended to name him his successor.

**23** He wisely placed some of his many sons throughout the regions of Judah and Benjamin in the various fortified cities. He supplied them with abundant provisions and acquired many wives for them.

**1** After Rehoboam's rule was established and solidified, he and all Israel rejected the law of the LORD.

Guzik - 2 Chronicles 12:1-16

***2 Chronicles 12 - The Chastisement of***

# Rehoboam and Judah

A. Egypt comes against a disobedient kingdom of Judah.

1. (1) The sin of Rehoboam and his people.

Now it came to pass, when Rehoboam had established the kingdom and had strengthened himself, that he forsook the law of the LORD, and all Israel along with him.

a. **That he forsook the law of the LORD:** Rehoboam did this when he was strong and secure. He trusted in God so long as he felt he needed Him; but he grew *independent* of God instead of more dependent on Him.

i. 1Ki. 14:21-24 tells us that this forsaking of the law of the LORD went so far as the allowance of *perverted persons in the land*, specifically describing prostitutes associated with the worship of idols. It is possible that the term *perverted persons* refers to both men and women cultic prostitutes. However, the term was used in Deu. 23:17-18 in distinction to feminine cultic prostitutes.

b. **And all Israel along with him:** The worst part about Rehoboam's sin was that it led the entire kingdom into sin with him.

i. 1Ki. 14:21-24 describes Judah's apostasy like this: " *Judah did evil in the sight of the LORD, and they provoked Him to jealousy with their sins*. These sins *provoked* the LORD to jealousy because they were essentially sins of idolatry. Israel turned their back on the God who loved and redeemed them, and like an unfaithful spouse, they pursued spiritual adultery with idols.

2. (2-4) Egypt attacks a disobedient Judah.

And it happened in the fifth year of King Rehoboam, *that* Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, because they had transgressed against the LORD, with twelve

hundred chariots, sixty thousand horsemen, and people without number who came with him out of Egypt; the Lubim and the Sukkiim and the Ethiopians. And he took the fortified cities of Judah and came to Jerusalem.

a. **Shishak king of Egypt:** "Known in Egyptian history as Sheshonk I, he was the founder of the Twenty-Second Dynasty and its most energetic Pharaoh. This particular campaign is documented by a list of conquered Palestinian cities that stands to this day carved on the wall of his temple of Amon at Karnak, Thebes." (Payne)

b. **Because they had transgressed against the LORD:** One might give any number of geopolitical explanations of why the Egyptians attacked the Kingdom of Judah at this time. The Chronicler understood that it was really the hand of the LORD in motion because of their disobedience.

i. The word **transgressed** (translated *unfaithful* in the NIV) is an important term here. "To be *unfaithful* to God is one of Chronicles' key terms (it never occurs in Samuel and Kings), and its regular

occurrence shows Israel's constant

estrangement from God. . . . It involves

denying God the worship due to him, usually on a national scale, and is the primary reason given in Chronicles for the exile." (Selman)

c. **He took the fortified cities of Judah and came to Jerusalem:** This was a serious threat to the entire southern kingdom. It might very well perish in just two generations since David.

3. (5) God's word to Rehoboam and Judah.

Then Shemaiah the prophet came to Rehoboam

and the leaders of Judah, who were gathered together in Jerusalem because of Shishak, and said to them, "Thus says the LORD: 'You have forsaken Me, and therefore I also have left you in the hand of Shishak.'"

a. **Shemaiah the prophet:** This was the same prophet that discouraged Rehoboam from attacking the 10 tribes of Israel

that rejected his leadership and formed the northern kingdom of Israel (2Ch. 11:1-4). He had the opportunity to speak to all **the leaders of Judah** because they were **gathered** on account of Shishak's invasion.

b. **You have forsaken Me, and therefore I also have left you in the hand of Shishak:** This was a correction that matched the offence.

If Judah insisted on forsaking God, they would find themselves forsaken in the day of their need. The great danger of telling God "Leave me alone" is that someday He may answer that prayer.

B. Repentance and servitude comes of Judah.

1. (6) The repentance of Rehoboam and Judah.

So the leaders of Israel and the king humbled themselves; and they said, "The LORD *is* righteous."

a. **So the leaders of Israel and the king humbled themselves:** This national repentance was initiated by the leaders of the kingdom. Historically, great moves of God's Spirit are seen when *leaders* are zealous about repentance and humility.

b. **The LORD is righteous:** This was the summary of their confession of sin. To recognize that **the LORD is righteous** is also recognize that we are not. To say this meant they understood that they *deserved* their present misfortune at the hands of Shishak.

2. (7-8) Deliverance with a reminder.

Now when the LORD saw that they humbled themselves, the word of the LORD came to

Shemaiah, saying, "They have humbled

themselves; *therefore* I will not destroy them, but I will grant them some deliverance. My wrath shall not be poured out on Jerusalem by the hand of Shishak. Nevertheless they will be his servants, that they may distinguish My service from the service of the kingdoms of the nations."

a. **I will not destroy them, but I will grant them some deliverance:** In response to the repentance of His people,

God granted Judah **some deliverance**. He would not allow them to be completely destroyed, but He would allow some difficulty to come to them.

b. **They will be his servants, that they may distinguish My service from the service of the kingdoms of the nations:** When Judah forsook the law of the LORD, it was as if they offered themselves as servants to another master. God will allow them to experience some of the consequences of serving another master.

i. "They shall be preserved, and serve their enemies, that they may see the difference between the service of God and that of man.

While they were pious, they found the service of the Lord to be *perfect freedom*; when they forsook the Lord, they found the fruit to be *perfect bondage*. A sinful life is both expensive and painful." (Clarke) ii. "Know by woeful experience, the worth of my work and wages by the want thereof, and the contrary miseries." (Trapp)

3. (9-12) The "some deliverance" granted to Judah.

So Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, and took away the treasures of the house of the LORD and the treasures of the king's house; he took everything. He also carried away the gold shields which Solomon had made.

Then King Rehoboam made bronze shields in their place, and committed *them* to the hands of the captains of the guard, who guarded the doorway of the king's house. And whenever the king entered the house of the LORD, the guard would go and bring them out; then they would take them back into the guardroom. When he humbled himself, the wrath of the LORD turned from him, so as not to destroy *him* completely; and things also went well in Judah.

a. **Took away the treasures of the house of the LORD and the treasures of the king's house:** Solomon left great wealth to his son Rehoboam, both in the temple and in

the palace. After only five years, that wealth was largely gone – because Rehoboam and Judah forsook the law of the LORD.

**b. He also carried away the gold shields which Solomon had made:** 1Ki. 10:16-17

mentions these 500 shields, 200 large and 300 small. These shields made beautiful displays in the House of the Forest of Lebanon, but they were of no use in battle. Gold was too heavy and too soft to be used as a metal for effective shields. This was an example of the emphasis of *image over substance* that began in the days of Solomon and worsened in the days of Rehoboam.

i. "Rehoboam made in their stead shields of bronze, and with these pathetically tried to keep up former appearances. It is like souls, who, when despoiled of their freshness and power by the enemy, laboriously endeavor to keep up an outward appearance of spiritual prosperity; or, like a fallen church, shorn of its strength, and robbed of its purity, seeking to hide its helplessness, and cover its nakedness, with the tinsel of ritualism, spurious revivalism, union, and anything that promises to give them some appearance." (Knapp)

ii. According to Dilday, each large shield was worth about \$120,000. The smaller shields were worth \$30,000. \$33 million was

invested in gold ceremonial shields - and now in the hands of the Egyptians.

**c. King Rehoboam made bronze shields in**

**their place:** The replacement of gold with bronze is a perfect picture of the decline under the days of Rehoboam. They dynasty of David went from gold to bronze in five years.

i. "They wished to emphasize how far Rehoboam fell in a mere few years. He had

inherited an empire; five years later, master of a small state, he could protect his capital itself only by denuding his palace of its treasures. Solomon's court had despised silver; his son's court had to be content with bronze!" (Payne)

ii. "The picture of Rehoboam's substitution of brass for gold is unutterably pathetic. Yet how often do the people of Jehovah masquerade amid imitations because they have lost the things of pure gold through unfaithfulness and sin." (Morgan)

**d. And committed them to the hands of**

**the captains of the guard:** In the days of Solomon, the gold shields hung on display in the House of the House of the Forest of Lebanon (1Ki. 10:16-17). Under Rehoboam, the replacement bronze shields were kept in a protected guardroom until they were specifically needed for state occasions.

**e. When he humbled himself, the wrath of the LORD turned from him, so as not to destroy him completely:** This great humbling of Rehoboam came *after* he had humbled himself as described in 2Ch. 12:6. It shows that God knew there was more humbling to do even after Rehoboam did it himself. Even so, this was God's *favor* and *mercy* to him because both Rehoboam and Judah *deserved* far worse. By the measure of justice alone God had the right **to destroy him completely.**

i. "If God could show favour to a man such as Rehoboam, who typified the attitude which resulted in Judah's eventual collapse, there was always hope for those who humbled themselves before God. Indeed, the interest in the people was surely a direct encouragement to the Chronicler's contemporaries to seek God for themselves." (Selman)

ii. Many in sin humble themselves before

God hoping that He will not humble them further. Nevertheless, God knows just how much humbling someone needs and if more is necessary, God will certainly bring it.

f. **Things also went well in Judah:** According to Poole this is literally, "There were *good things*." The idea is either that despite their corruption there was still a remnant of good in Judah and for that reason God held back judgment; or, that despite the terrible loss to the Egyptians there was still a remnant of prosperity in Judah.

4. (13-16) A summary of Rehoboam's reign.

Thus Rehoboam strengthened himself in Jerusalem and reigned. Now Rehoboam *was* forty-one years old when he became king; and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which the LORD had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, to put His name there. His mother's name *was* Naamah, an Ammonitess. And he did evil, because he did not prepare his heart to seek the LORD. The acts of Rehoboam, first and last, *are* they not written in the book of Shemaiah the prophet, and of Iddo the seer concerning genealogies? And *there were* wars between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all their days. So Rehoboam rested with his fathers, and was buried in the City of David. Then Abijah his son reigned in his place.

a. **Thus Rehoboam strengthened himself in Jerusalem and reigned:** Out of God's mercy, he survived the threat from Shishak and reigned until his natural death.

b. **And he did evil, because he did not prepare his heart to seek the LORD:** This was the root of the problem with Rehoboam. He had even less of a relationship with God than his father Solomon did. At times he did **seek the LORD**, but never with a *prepared heart*.

i. "You see how readily Rehoboam went, first towards God, then towards idols, and then back again, towards God; *he was always*

*ready to shift and change*, he wrought no great reforms in the land; we do not read that, he held a great passover, as Hezekiah did, or that the high places were taken away; but, as soon as Shishak was gone, he felt perfectly content. There was not anything real and permanent in his religion; it did not hold him. He held it sometimes, but it never held him." (Spurgeon)

c. **So Rehoboam rested with his fathers:** The Chronicler seems to give more attention to the life of Rehoboam than the writer of 1 Kings.

This may be because Rehoboam is somewhat of a *pattern* and an *encouragement* to the returning exiles to whom the Chronicler first wrote.

i. "Chronicles' over-all view of Rehoboam

[has] quite a different feel from Kings. While accepting Rehoboam's very real failings as a leader, Chronicles is keen to demonstrate the value of repentance and the extent of God's mercy." (Selman)

ii. "As the first king of Judah, Rehoboam is an example of God's dealings with David's whole dynasty." (Selman)

Therefore, the following themes are seen in Chronicles' description of Rehoboam:

- Obedience to the prophetic word (2Ch. 11:1-4)

- Strengthening the kingdom through building work (2Ch. 11:5-12)

- Activities of priests, Levites, and those who seek God (2Ch. 11:13-17)

- An expanding royal family (2Ch. 11:18-21)

- Humble repentance (2Ch. 12:5-12)

© 2006 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** Because they were unfaithful to the LORD, in King Rehoboam's fifth year, King Shishak of Egypt attacked Jerusalem. **3** He had 1,200 chariots, 60,000

horsemen, and an innumerable number of soldiers who accompanied him from Egypt, including Libyans, Sukkites, and Cushites. **4**

He captured the fortified cities of Judah and marched against Jerusalem. **5** Shemaiah the prophet visited Rehoboam and the leaders of Judah who were assembled in Jerusalem because of Shishak. He said to them, "This is what the LORD says: 'You have rejected me, so I have rejected you and will hand you over to Shishak.'" **6** The leaders of Israel and the king humbled themselves and said, "The LORD is just." **7** When the LORD saw that they humbled themselves, he gave this message to Shemaiah: "They have humbled themselves, so I will not destroy them. I will deliver them soon. My anger will not be unleashed against Jerusalem through Shishak. **8** Yet they will become his subjects, so they can experience how serving me differs from serving the surrounding nations."

**9** King Shishak of Egypt attacked Jerusalem and took away the treasures of the LORD's temple and of the royal palace; he took everything, including the gold shields that Solomon had made. **10** King Rehoboam made bronze shields to replace them and assigned them to the officers of the royal guard who protected the entrance to the royal palace. **11** Whenever the king visited the LORD's temple, the royal guards carried them and then brought them back to the guardroom.

**12** So when Rehoboam humbled himself, the LORD relented from his anger and did not annihilate him; Judah experienced some good things. **13** King Rehoboam solidified his rule in Jerusalem; he was forty-one years old when he became king and he ruled for seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city the LORD chose from all the tribes of Israel to be his home. Rehoboam's mother was an Ammonite named Naamah. **14** He did evil because he was not determined to follow the LORD.

**15** The events of Rehoboam's reign, from start to finish, are recorded in the Annals of Shemaiah the prophet and of Iddo the seer that include genealogical records. **16** Then Rehoboam passed away and was buried in the City of David. His son Abijah replaced him as king.

**1** In the eighteenth year of the reign of King Jeroboam, Abijah became king over Judah.

Guzik - 2 Chronicles 13:1-22

***2 Chronicles 13 - King Abijah and a Victory for***

# Judah

A. King Abijah speaks to King Jeroboam.

1. (1-3) The two armies gather for war.

In the eighteenth year of King Jeroboam, Abijah became king over Judah. He reigned three years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Michaiah the daughter of Uriel of Gibeah. And there was war between Abijah and Jeroboam. Abijah set the battle in order with an army of valiant warriors, four hundred thousand choice men. Jeroboam also drew up in battle formation against him with eight hundred thousand choice men, mighty men of valor.

a. **In the eighteenth year of King**

**Jeroboam:** This is the only description of the reign of a Judean king that is synchronized with the reign of a contemporary king of Israel.

Though the books of 1 and 2 Kings told the story of both southern and northern kingdoms, 2 Chronicles focuses only on the southern kingdom of Judah. The connection in this verse is probably due to the fact that the events involve Israel as well as Judah.

b. **He reigned three years in Jerusalem:** This son of Rehoboam named Abijah (called Abijam in 1 Kings) only **reigned three years**, showing that God did not bless his reign.

c. **Four hundred thousand choice men. . . . against him with eight hundred thousand**

**choice men:** In this war between the southern kingdom of Judah and the northern kingdom of Israel, there was a clear numerical advantage for the northern kingdom.

i. "Now it is very possible that there is a *cipher* too much in all these numbers, and that they should stand thus: *Abijah's*

army, *forty thousands; Jeroboam's eighty thousands; the slain, fifty thousand.*" (Clarke)

ii. On the other hand, "A vast number: but it hath been oft observed and recorded by sacred and profane historians, that in those ancient times there were very numerous armies, and oftentimes very great slaughters; and if this slaughter was more than ordinary, there is nothing strange nor incredible, because the Almighty God fought against the Israelites." (Poole)

2. (4-12) Abijah's appeal to Jeroboam and the army of Israel. Then Abijah stood on Mount Zemaraim, which *is* in the mountains of Ephraim, and said, "Hear me, Jeroboam and all Israel: Should you not know that the LORD God of Israel gave the dominion over Israel to David forever, to him and his sons, by a covenant of salt? Yet Jeroboam the son of Nebat, the servant of Solomon the son of David, rose up and rebelled against his lord. Then worthless rogues gathered to him, and strengthened themselves against Rehoboam the son of Solomon, when Rehoboam was young and inexperienced and could not withstand them. And now you think to withstand the kingdom of the LORD, which is in the hand of the sons of David; and you *are* a great multitude, and with you are the gold calves which Jeroboam made for you as gods. Have you not cast out the priests of the LORD, the sons of Aaron, and the Levites, and made for yourselves priests, like the peoples of *other* lands, so that whoever comes to consecrate himself with a young bull and seven rams may be a priest of *things that are* not gods? But as for us, the LORD *is* our God, and we have not forsaken Him; and the priests who minister to the LORD *are* the sons of Aaron, and the Levites *attend* to *their* duties. And they burn to the LORD

every morning and every evening burnt sacrifices and sweet incense; *they also set* the showbread *in order on* the pure

*gold* table, and the lampstand of gold with its lamps to burn every evening; for we keep the command of the LORD our God, but you have forsaken Him. Now look, God Himself is with us as *our* head, and His priests with sounding trumpets to sound the alarm against you. O children of Israel, do not fight against the LORD God of your fathers, for you shall not prosper!"

**a. The LORD God of Israel gave the dominion over Israel to David forever, to him and his sons, by a covenant of salt?**

Abijah's argument is that the dynasty of David is the only legitimate house to rule over the tribes of Israel, including these 10 northern tribes that rebelled under Jeroboam.

i. This promise God made to David was called **a covenant of salt**, which meant a *serious* covenant because it was sealed by sacrifice (sacrifices always included salt, Lev.

2:13). A **covenant of salt** also had the following associations:

- A *pure* covenant (salt stays pure as a chemical compound).
- An *enduring* covenant (salt makes things preserve and endure).
- A *valuable* covenant (salt was expensive).

**b. Yet Jeroboam the son of Nebat, the servant of Solomon the son of David, rose up and rebelled against his lord:** Here King Abijah presents a rather selective view of history. It was true that Jeroboam **rebelled**, but it is also true that Rehoboam was a fool who provoked the northern tribes to rebellion.

i. "It is a strange mixture of misrepresentation and religion. The misrepresentation is in his statement of the reason for the rebellion of Israel, which culminated in the crowning of Jeroboam. He

attributed the rebellion to the influence of evil men whom he described as 'sons of Belial.'" (Morgan)

ii. "We need not scrupulously inquire into the lawfulness of this war, for this Abijah, though here he makes a fair flourish, and maintained the better cause, yet was indeed an ungodly man, 1Ki. 15:3, and therefore minded not the satisfaction of his conscience, but only the recovery of his parent's ancient dominions." (Poole)

c. **But as for us, the LORD is our God, and we have not forsaken Him:** Abijah contrasted the rejection of God on behalf of Jeroboam and the people of the northern tribes with the comparative faithfulness of the king and people of Judah.

d. **Do not fight against the LORD God of your fathers, for you shall not prosper!**

Abijah brought his sermon to a dramatic finish by challenging the king and people of the northern tribes to recognize that they were really fighting against **the LORD God of** their fathers.

B. God's deliverance for Judah and King Abijah.

1. (13-14) Jeroboam's ambush.

But Jeroboam caused an ambush to go around behind them; so they were in front of Judah, and the ambush *was* behind them. And when Judah looked around, to their surprise the battle line *was* at both front and rear; and they cried out to the LORD, and the priests sounded the trumpets.

a. **Jeroboam caused an ambush to go**

**around behind them:** This was a dishonorable tactic because Jeroboam ambushed while they were negotiating before the battle.

i. **The battle line was at both front and rear:** "The point to remember is that our enemies may shut us in on all sides,

preventing reinforcements from north, south, east, and west; but no earthly power can ever shut off God from above us. . . .

The way upwards is always kept clear; the ladder which links the beleaguered soul with God and heaven can never be blocked, except by transgression and sin." (Meyer) b. **And they cried out to the LORD:** When the battle lines unexpectedly changed, the army of Judah knew that a surprise attack from an army twice as large left them in a very dangerous place. The only thing they could do was cry **out to the LORD.**

2. (16-19) Victory for Judah.

Then the men of Judah gave a shout; and as the men of Judah shouted, it happened that God struck Jeroboam and all Israel before Abijah and Judah. And the children of Israel fled before Judah, and God delivered them into their hand.

Then Abijah and his people struck them with a great slaughter; so five hundred thousand choice men of Israel fell slain. Thus the children of Israel were subdued at that time; and the children of Judah prevailed, because they relied on the LORD

God of their fathers. And Abijah pursued Jeroboam and took cities from him: Bethel with its villages, Jeshanah with its villages, and Ephraim with its villages.

a. **As the men of Judah shouted, it happened that God struck Jeroboam and**

**all Israel:** They added the shout of faith to their cry unto the LORD and **God struck** the army of Israel. We are not told *how* **God struck** them, but God certainly defended His trusting people when they could not defend themselves.

i. "So 'God routed Jeroboam,' though whether this was through direct supernatural intervention, or through the courage of his embattled people as they saw themselves surrounded by the enemy, is not

stated." (Payne)

ii. "It was poor business, in that it was a last resort, but it was sincere; and the answer of God was immediate, and complete victory resulted." (Morgan)

**b. The children of Judah prevailed, because they relied on the LORD God of**

**their fathers:** The Chronicler wanted the point to be clear. The reason why Judah defeated Israel even though they were surprised and

outnumbered was because Judah **relied on the LORD.**

i. " *Bethel's* capture is an ironic comment on the golden calves' inability to defend their own sanctuary ( cf. 1Ki. 12:28-33)." (Selman) 3. (20-22) A summary of Abijah's reign.

So Jeroboam did not recover strength again in the days of Abijah; and the LORD struck him, and he died. But Abijah grew mighty, married fourteen wives, and begot twenty-two sons and sixteen daughters. Now the rest of the acts of Abijah, his ways, and his sayings *are* written in the annals of the prophet Iddo.

**a. Jeroboam did not recover strength**

**again in the days of Abijah:** This ended the ongoing threat from Israel against Judah.

Jeroboam was not left strong enough to launch an attack and stayed weak until **the LORD**

**struck him, and he died.**

**b. But Abijah grew mighty:** The profile of Abijah in 1 Kings 15 is overwhelmingly negative.

We read, *he walked in all the sins of his father, which he had done before him; his heart was not loyal to the LORD his God, as was the heart of his father David.* (1Ki. 15:3) Yet the Chronicler says nothing good or bad about the overall reign of Abijah.

i. This was because the Chronicler wanted to emphasize the *good* that happened under the reign of Abijah; namely, the

great deliverance that came when Judah relied on God. The Chronicler *assumes* the reader knows the material about Abijah in 1 Kings; yet he wanted to show that even a bad man can be shown grace when he relies on the LORD. This would be a great encouragement to the returned exiles to whom the Chronicler first wrote.

ii. Yet from our more complete understanding of Abijah's life, we can learn another lesson: *that one great spiritual victory does not make an entire life before God*. One should never trust in a past spiritual accomplishment or season of victory.

iii. **The annals of the prophet:**

" *Bemidrash*, 'in the commentary;' this, as far as I recollect, is the first place where a *midrash* or *commentary* is mentioned." (Clarke)

© 2006 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** He ruled for three years in Jerusalem. His mother was Michaiah, the daughter of Uriel from Gibeah. There was war between Abijah and Jeroboam. **3** Abijah launched the attack with 400,000 well-trained warriors, while Jeroboam deployed against him 800,000 well-trained warriors.

**4** Abijah ascended Mount Zemaraim, in the Ephraimite hill country, and said: "Listen to me, Jeroboam and all Israel! **5** Don't you realize that the LORD God of Israel has given David and his dynasty lasting dominion over Israel by a formal agreement? **6** Jeroboam son of Nebat, a servant of Solomon son of David, rose up and rebelled against his master. **7** Lawless good-for-nothing men gathered around him and conspired against Rehoboam son of Solomon, when Rehoboam was an inexperienced young man and could not resist them. **8** Now you are declaring that you will resist the LORD's rule through the Davidic dynasty. You have a huge army, and bring with you the gold calves that Jeroboam made for you as gods. **9** But you banished the LORD's

priests, Aaron's descendants, and the Levites, and appointed your own priests just as the surrounding nations do! Anyone who comes to consecrate himself with a young bull or seven rams becomes a priest of these fake gods! **10** But as for us, the LORD is our God and we have not rejected him. Aaron's descendants serve as the LORD's priests and the Levites assist them with the work. **11** They offer burnt sacrifices to the LORD every morning and every evening, along with fragrant incense. They arrange the Bread of the Presence on a ritually clean table and light the lamps on the gold lampstand every evening. Certainly we are observing the LORD our God's regulations, but you have rejected him. **12** Now look, God is with us as our leader. His priests are ready to blow the trumpets to signal the attack against you. You Israelites, don't fight against the LORD God of your ancestors, for you will not win!"

**13** Now Jeroboam had sent some men to ambush the Judahite army from behind. The main army was in front of the Judahite army; the ambushers were behind it. **14** The men of Judah turned around and realized they were being attacked from the front and the rear. So they cried out for help to the LORD. The priests blew their trumpets, **15** and the men of Judah gave the battle cry. As the men of Judah gave the battle cry, the LORD struck down Jeroboam and all Israel before Abijah and Judah. **16** The Israelites fled from before the Judahite army, and God handed them over to the men of Judah. **17** Abijah and his army thoroughly defeated them; 500,000 well-trained Israelite men fell dead. **18** That day the Israelites were defeated; the men of Judah prevailed because they relied on the LORD God of their ancestors.

**19** Abijah chased Jeroboam; he seized from him these cities: Bethel and its surrounding towns, Jeshanah and its surrounding towns, and Ephron and its surrounding towns.

**20** Jeroboam did not regain power during the reign of Abijah. The LORD struck him down and he died. **21**

Abijah's power grew; he had fourteen wives and fathered twenty-two sons and sixteen daughters.

**22** The rest of the events of Abijah's reign, including his deeds and sayings, are recorded in the writings of the prophet Iddo.

**1** (13:23) Abijah passed away and was buried in the City of David. His son Asa replaced him as king. During his reign the land had rest for ten years.

Guzik - 2 Chronicles 14:1-15

## **2 Chronicles 14 - The Reign of Asa**

A. The characteristics of the reign of Asa.

1. (1-6) The blessedness of the reign of King Asa.

So Abijah rested with his fathers, and they buried him in the City of David. Then Asa his son reigned in his place. In his days the land was quiet for ten years. Asa did *what was* good and right in the eyes of the LORD his God, for he removed the altars of the foreign *gods* and the high places, and broke down the *sacred* pillars and cut down the wooden images. He commanded Judah to seek the LORD God of their fathers, and to observe the law and the commandment. He also removed the high places and the incense altars from all the cities of Judah, and the kingdom was quiet under him. And he built fortified cities in Judah, for the land had rest; he had no war in those years, because the LORD had given him rest.

a. **Asa his son reigned in his place:** This great-grandson of Solomon took the throne Judah at the end of Jeroboam's reign in Israel, after his father's brief reign.

b. **Asa did what was good and right in the eyes of the LORD:** As is related in 1Ki. 15:11, Asa was more like his ancestor David in his character as a king than he was like his own father.

c. **He removed the altars of the foreign gods and the high places:** Asa launched a reform movement that lashed out against idolatry and officially sanctioned sin.

i. 1Ki. 15:12 says that *he banished the perverted persons from the land*. These state-sanctioned homosexual idol-temple prostitutes were introduced into Judah during the reign of Rehoboam (1Ki. 14:24).

Asa's father Abijam didn't remove these perversions and idols, but King Asa did.

ii. 1 Kings 15 also tells us that *he removed Maachah his grandmother from being queen mother, because she had made an obscene image of Asherah*. This demonstrated the thoroughness of Asa's reforms. He was able to act righteously even when his family was wrong, in particular his own grandmother

(called *Michaiah* in 2Ch. 13:2). "It is in a man's own family circle that his faithfulness is put fairly to the test." (Knapp)

**d. He commanded Judah to seek the LORD**

**God of their fathers:** King Asa could not *force* people to seek the LORD and obey him. Yet he could command them with moral force and with his own example.

**e. He also removed the high places:**

Interestingly, 1Ki. 15:14 says of the reign of Asa, *but the high places were not removed*.

Since 2Ch. 14:3 connects these **high places** with **altars of the foreign gods**. Therefore Asa removed the high places that were dedicated to idols, but not the ones that were dedicated to the LORD.

**f. The kingdom was quiet under him . . .**

**because the LORD had given him rest:** 1Ki.

15:14 tells us that *Asa's heart was loyal to the LORD all his days*. Here we see the blessing he and the kingdom of Judah enjoyed from his loyal heart to God.

**i. He built fortified cities in Judah:**

"Though he had no war, yet he provided for it. So did our Queen Elizabeth; and so must every Christian soldier." (Trapp) 2. (7-8) Asa's emphasis on strengthening the nation's defense.

Therefore he said to Judah, "Let us build these cities and make walls around *them*, and towers, gates, and bars, *while* the land *is* yet before us, because we have sought the LORD our God; we have sought *Him*, and He has given us rest on every side." So they built and prospered. And Asa had an army of three hundred thousand from Judah who carried shields and spears, and from Benjamin two hundred and eighty thousand men who carried shields and drew bows; all these *were* mighty men of valor.

a. **So they built and prospered:** The

Chronicler includes this account, not previously recorded in 1 Kings, to encourage the people in his own day who had been allowed to rebuild the destroyed city of Jerusalem after its fall to the Babylonians.

B. Deliverance from the Ethiopians.

1. (9-11) The threat from Ethiopia and the cry to God.

Then Zerah the Ethiopian came out against them with an army of a million men and three hundred chariots, and he came to Mareshah. So Asa went out against him, and they set the troops in battle array in the Valley of Zephathah at Mareshah. And Asa cried out to the LORD his God, and said, "LORD, *it is* nothing for You to help, whether with many or with those who have no power; help us, O LORD our God, for we rest on You, and in Your name we go against this multitude. O LORD, You *are* our God; do not let man prevail against You!"

a. **Came out against them with an army of a million men and three hundred chariots:** This fearful army obviously posed a great threat to the Kingdom of Judah. Even though the army of Judah had an army of 580,000 men (2Ch.

14:8), this enemy army was almost twice as large.

i. Asa could know that God's power was not limited because the army of Judah was

smaller by what God did for Judah under the reign of Abijah, his father (2Ch. 13:3).

ii. "Zerah himself is most likely to have been a Nubian (= Sudanese) general in the army of Pharaoh Osorkon I ( c. 924-884 B.C.), Shoshenq I's son and successor ( *cf.* 2Ch. 12:22ff.)." (Selman)

b. **Asa cried out to the LORD his God:** In his prayer Asa correctly understood that God's power was not enhanced or limited by man's

apparent strength or weakness. He recognized that this battle belonged to the LORD and called upon God to defend His honor (**do not let man prevail against You!** ).

i. "Remind God of His entire responsibility." (Meyer)

2. (12-15) God gives Judah victory over the Ethiopians.

So the LORD struck the Ethiopians before Asa and Judah, and the Ethiopians fled. And Asa and the people who *were* with him pursued them to Gerar. So the Ethiopians were overthrown, and they could not recover, for they were broken before the LORD and His army. And they carried away very much spoil. Then they defeated all the cities around Gerar, for the fear of the LORD

came upon them; and they plundered all the cities, for there was exceedingly much spoil in them. They also attacked the livestock

enclosures, and carried off sheep and camels in abundance, and returned to Jerusalem.

a. **So the LORD struck the Ethiopians:** God fought on behalf of King Asa and the Kingdom of Judah; He fought so effectively that **they were broken before the LORD and His army.**

b. **And they carried away very much spoil:** Not only were the people of God *delivered* from this danger, they were also *enriched* when the LORD fought on their behalf. In this sense, they were more than conquerors in that the LORD

did the fighting and they shared in the **spoil**.

i. "The spoil was immense, because the multitude was prodigious, indeed almost incredible; *a million* of men in one place is almost too much for the mind to conceive, but there may be some mistake in the numerals; it is evident from the whole account that the number was vast and the spoil great." (Clarke)

© 2006 David Guzik - *No distribution beyond personal use without permission* **2** (14:1) Asa did what the LORD his God desired and approved. **3** He removed the pagan altars and the high places, smashed the sacred pillars, and cut down the Asherah poles. **4** He ordered Judah to seek the LORD God of their ancestors and to observe his law and commands. **5**

He removed the high places and the incense altars from all the cities of Judah. The kingdom had rest under his rule.

**6** He built fortified cities throughout Judah, for the land was at rest and there was no war during those years; the LORD gave him peace. **7** He said to the people of Judah: "Let's build these cities and fortify them with walls, towers, and barred gates. The land remains ours because we have followed the LORD our God and he has made us secure on all sides." So they built the cities and prospered.

**8** Asa had an army of 300,000 men from Judah, equipped with large shields and spears. He also had 280,000 men from Benjamin who carried small shields and were adept archers; they were all skilled warriors. **9** Zerah the Cushite marched against them with an army of 1,000,000 men and 300 chariots. He arrived at Mareshah, **10** and Asa went out to oppose him. They deployed for battle in the Valley of Zephathah near Mareshah.

**11** Asa prayed to the LORD his God: "O LORD, there is no one but you who can help the weak when they are vastly outnumbered. Help us, O LORD our God, for we rely on you

and have marched on your behalf against this huge army. O LORD our God, don't let men prevail against you!"

**12** The LORD struck down the Cushites before Asa and Judah. The Cushites fled, **13** and Asa and his army chased them as far as Gerar. The Cushites were wiped out; they were shattered before the LORD and his army. The men of Judah carried off a huge amount of plunder. **14** They defeated all the cities surrounding Gerar, for the LORD caused them to panic. The men of Judah looted all the cities, for they contained a huge amount of goods. **15**

They also attacked the tents of the herdsmen in charge of the livestock. They carried off many sheep and camels and then returned to Jerusalem.

**1** God's Spirit came upon Azariah son of Oded.

Guzik - 2 Chronicles 15:1-19

## ***2 Chronicles 15 - Revival and Reform in Judah***

A. Azariah brings a warning from God.

1. (1-2) Asa is exhorted to seek God.

Now the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded. And he went out to meet Asa, and said to him: "Hear me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin. The LORD *is* with you while you are with Him. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you."

a. **Azariah the son of Oded:** This was one of the lesser-known prophets in the early years of the Kingdom of Judah. He came and bravely spoke a word to a king who was flushed with success after the great victory over the Ethiopians.

b. **The LORD is with you while you are with Him:** King Asa and the Kingdom of Judah had just enjoyed a significant victory over a mighty army. It would be easy to think that they had a permanent claim to God's favor and blessing. Speaking through the prophet Azariah, God wanted Asa to know the importance of *abiding* in the LORD.

c. **If you seek Him, He will be found by**

**you:** This is an important principle repeated many times in the Bible. The idea is that when we draw near to God, He reveals Himself to us.

God does not hide Himself from the seeking heart.

- *You will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul.* (Deu. 4:29)

- *And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.* (Jer. 29:13)

- *Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.* (Mat. 7:7) i. The converse is also true: **if you forsake Him, He will forsake you**. Ultimately, God gives us what we *want* from Him. If He gives the heart that seeks Him more, and He also gives the heart that rejects Him what it desires.

- ii. "He revealed an inclusive philosophy of life under the control of God. . . . The principle is of perpetual application. It represents God as unchanging. All apparent changes on His part are really changes in the attitude of men toward Him. Man with God, finds God with him. Man forsaking God, finds that he is forsaken of God." (Morgan) 2. (3-7) The exhortation in light of the past disobedience of Israel.

"For a long time Israel *has been* without the true God, without a teaching priest, and without law; but when in their trouble they turned to the LORD God of Israel, and sought Him, He was found by them. And in those times *there was* no peace to the one who went out, nor to the one who came in, but great turmoil *was* on all the inhabitants of the lands. So nation was destroyed by nation, and city by city, for God troubled them with every adversity. But you, be strong and

do not let your hands be weak, for your work shall be rewarded!"

**a. Without the true God, without a**

**teaching priest, and without law:** The Prophet Azariah describes the bad state of Israel in their overconfidence and distance from God.

They had rejected God, those who teach them the Word of God, and the law itself.

i. **Without a teaching priest** reminds us that the priesthood and the Levites did much more than administer the sacrificial system.

They were to be scattered throughout the tribes of Israel to teach the Word of God to the people.

ii. "The priests' teaching role was vital to the moral and spiritual quality of national life ( *cf.*

*e.g.* Lev. 10:11; Deu. 33:10; Mal. 2:7; 2Ch.

17:7-9), but when it was neglected, the truth about God declined and the fabric of covenant society was undermined." (Selman)

iii. "His words about the 'long time' when 'Israel was without the true God' probably refer to the lawless, and often faithless, days of the Judges (Jdg. 21:25)." (Payne)

**b. But when in their trouble they turned to the LORD God of Israel, and sought Him, He was found by them:** The Chronicler used this message from the Prophet Azariah to remind the people of Israel in his own day (Ezra's days of the return from exile) that even when the people of God were set low because of their disobedience, God would restore them when **they turned to the LORD God of Israel.**

**c. Be strong . . . for your work shall be rewarded:** In spite of the great trouble that God had visited on His previously disobedient people, King Asa should be encouraged at God's heart for forgiveness and restoration.

i. "This prophecy is unusual in that it is an exposition of earlier parts of the Old Testament though as an example of the speeches in Chronicles it is not untypical. Its style is sermonic, but its prophetic character comes through in the immediacy of its final imperative." (Selman) B. The reforms of King Asa.

1. (8-9) King Asa cleanses the land and gathers the nation together for worship.

And when Asa heard these words and the prophecy of Oded the prophet, he took courage, and removed the abominable idols from all the land of Judah and Benjamin and from the cities which he had taken in the mountains of Ephraim; and he restored the altar of the LORD that was before the vestibule of the LORD. Then he gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and those who dwelt with them from Ephraim, Manasseh, and Simeon, for they came over to him in great numbers from Israel when they saw that the LORD his God was with him.

a. **He took courage, and removed the**

**abominable idols:** This was the good and godly response. Instead of becoming fatalistic or passive, King Asa took action based on the open heart of God to restore and forgive.

i. Some believe that the forgiving nature of God gives one a reason to sin, based on the idea that we can sin now and simply ask forgiveness later. Asa's reaction to the word of the prophet shows the *correct* response to the forgiving nature of God – to respond with a greater love and a greater passion for obedience.

ii. We should notice that this took **courage** for King Asa to do. He had to combat against:

- The entrenched interests in favor of idolatry
- The unseen spiritual forces in favor of idolatry

- The example of his predecessors and neighbor tribes to the north in favor of idolatry
  - His own fleshly inclinations in favor of idolatry and compromise
  - The lethargy of compromise and indifference that supports idolatry
- iii. Many well meaning reformers accomplish little because they lack the **courage** to really stand for their godly convictions.
- iv. "What is important is that it touched the entire nation, including the queen mother (15:16), all Judah (14:5), and even the north (15:8-9)." (Selman)
- b. **And he restored the altar of the LORD:** King Asa did more than remove the wrong; he also **restored** the right. This is an important part of any reform, and any time of renewal must be more than speaking out against the wrong. It must also take positive steps towards the good.
- c. **They came over to him in great numbers from Israel when they saw that the LORD his God was with him:** King Asa's bold obedience to God earned the respect of the godly remnant among the apostate northern tribes that made up the Kingdom of Israel. They wanted to be part of a committed return to God.
- i. The Chronicler recorded these events – not included in the history of King Asa found in 1 Kings – as an encouragement to the returned exiles in his own day. They could believe that if they obeyed God courageously as King Asa did, that God would also gather a faithful remnant to their small number. They could see that courageously obedient believers attract others.

ii. "Chronicles constantly highlights the opportunities for reunification ( *cf.* 2Ch.

11:13-17; 30:11; 34:6), which always arose

in the context of worship rather than a result of military force ( *cf.* 2Ch. 11:1-4; 13:8, 13:13-14)." (Selman) 2. (10-15)

A public covenant made at Jerusalem.

So they gathered together at Jerusalem in the third month, in the fifteenth year of the reign of Asa. And they offered to the LORD at that time seven hundred bulls and seven thousand sheep from the spoil they had brought. Then they entered into a covenant to seek the LORD God of their fathers with all their heart and with all their soul; and whoever would not seek the LORD God of Israel was to be put to death, whether small or great, whether man or woman. Then they took an oath before the LORD with a loud voice, with shouting and trumpets and rams' horns. And all Judah rejoiced at the oath, for they had sworn with all their heart and sought Him with all their soul; and He was found by them, and the LORD

gave them rest all around.

a. **They offered to the LORD at that time seven hundred bulls and seven thousand sheep from the spoil they had brought:** They rightly recognized that their victory came from God, so they gave back to Him from the **spoil** of the victory over the Ethiopians (2Ch.

14:12-15).

i. When we recognize that what we have comes from God, it is much easier to give to Him out of what He has given us. A lack of generosity is often rooted in refusing to recognize that God is the ultimate provider and every good and perfect gift comes from Him (Jam. 1:17).

ii. "Such assemblies are typical of a number of kings in Chronicles, including David (1Ch.

13:2-5; 15:3; 28:8; 29:1ff), Solomon (2Ch.

1:3; 5:6), Jehoshaphat (2Ch. 20:5, *etc.*), and especially Hezekiah ( *e.g.* 2Ch. 29:23; 29:28; 30:2; 30:25)." (Selman)

b. **They entered into a covenant to seek the LORD God of their fathers with all**

**their heart and with all their soul:** After sacrifice, they committed the matter to **a covenant** between them and God. This was after the pattern of the covenant the people of Israel originally made with God at Sinai (Exo. 24:7-8).

i. This covenant was deliberately connected with these past covenants (**to seek the LORD God of their fathers**). This was their way of saying, "LORD God, we want the same relationship with You that our great forefathers enjoyed. We want to be

bound to You with the same kind of covenant."

ii. This covenant was supported by the threat of punishment (**whoever would not seek the LORD God of Israel was to be put to death**) and with a public oath (**they took an oath before the LORD with a loud voice**). This combination of a public oath and a promised punishment made the whole community accountable to keep this promise they made. This was a demonstration of the fact that it was a covenant made **with all their heart and with all their soul**. It was not a half-hearted or half-way covenant that no one could be held accountable to.

iii. "Do not think too much of entering into and keeping a covenant with God; but remember that the Lord Jesus, on our behalf, has entered into covenant relation with the Father, and the Father with us in Him. This is the new covenant." (Meyer) iv. " *Should be put to death*, by virtue of all those laws which command that such persons should be *cut off*, and in pursuance of that law,

Deu. 17:2." (Poole) c. **All Judah rejoiced at the oath:** The seriousness of the covenant became a source of joy for the people. There was a sincere and true joy in being fully committed to God and accountable for that commitment in the community.

d. **And He was found by them, and the**

**LORD gave them rest all around:** Through the Prophet Azariah, God had promised Asa in 2Ch. 15:2: *If you seek Him, He will be found by you.* This was the fulfillment of that promise.

Not only the king himself, but the nation as a whole **found** they LORD when they sought Him this way.

- They sought Him *together*, having

**gathered together at Jerusalem.**

- They sought Him through *sacrifice*, trusting in God's promise of atonement through the blood of an innocent victim.

- They sought Him through *covenant*, made with a view to God's working with His people in the past (**to seek the LORD God of their fathers**).

- They sought Him *completely*, **with all their heart and with all their soul.**

- They sought Him *in an accountable way*, promising punishment upon themselves if they were to forsake this covenant.

- They sought Him *publicly*, having taken a public **oath** together.

- They sought Him *joyfully*, rejoicing in the oath they had taken.

i. Their reward for seeking God in this way was both that they **found** the LORD, and when they found Him, He **gave them rest all around.** Some fear to seek the LORD

this diligently because they are afraid that should they really find God, it would be more of a burden than a blessing to them. The Chronicler wanted us to know that when we

seek God in this radical way and find Him,  
the reward is **rest all around**.

3. (16-19) The extension of the reform into the king's own household.

Also he removed Maachah, the mother of Asa the king, from *being* queen mother, because she had made an obscene image of Asherah; and Asa cut down her obscene image, then crushed and burned *it* by the Brook Kidron. But the high places were not removed from Israel.

Nevertheless the heart of Asa was loyal all his days. He also brought into the house of God the things that his father had dedicated and that he himself had dedicated: silver and gold and utensils. And there was no war until the thirty-fifth year of the reign of Asa.

a. **Also he removed Maachah the mother of Asa the king, from being queen mother, because she had made an obscene image**

**of Asherah:** This demonstrates the thoroughness of Asa's reforms. He was able to act righteously even when his family was wrong, in particular his own grandmother. "It is in a man's own family circle that his faithfulness is put fairly to the test." (Knapp) i. 1Ki. 15:12-15 makes it clearer that

**Maachah** was actually the *grandmother* of King Asa. "Maacah was apparently the daughter of Uriel of Gibeah (2Ch. 13:2) and Tamar (2Sa. 14:27), hence the granddaughter of Absalom, David's rebellious son." (Patterson and Austel) ii. **An obscene**

**image:** "This image is described as 'obscene' in our English translation, but the Hebrew word is closer in meaning to 'frightening,' 'horrible,' or

'abominable.' Some commentators believe it

was some sort of phallic symbol consistent

with the fertility cult of Asherah." (Dilday) iii. "From the whole, it is pretty evident that the image was a mere

*Priapus*, or something of the same nature, and that Maachah had an assembly in the grove where the image was set up, and doubtless worshipped it with the most impure rites. What the Roman *Priapus* was I need not tell the learned reader; and as to the unlearned, it would not profit him to know." (Clarke) iv. "The Jews imagine that Maachah repented, and her name became changed into *Michaiah, daughter of Uriel of Gibeah*; and that this was done that there might be no mention of her former name, lest it

should be a reproach to her." (Clarke) b. **But the high places were not removed from Israel:** 2Ch. 14:3 says that Asa did remove the high places, but it mentions these high places in connection with *altars of the foreign gods*. Therefore Asa removed the high places that were dedicated to idols, but not the ones that were dedicated to the LORD.

i. "More probably, however, the addition of *from Israel* ( cf. 1Ki. 15:14; cf. 2Ch. 15:8) suggests that the Chronicler distinguished between the high places in Judah (14:3, 5) and those in Israel (15:17)." (Selman) ii. "It was also a more extensive removal,

'from the whole land'; for it included areas Asa 'had captured in the hills of Ephraim'

during the five years of hostility that had immediately preceded." (Payne)

c. **Nevertheless the heart of Asa was loyal all his days:** Asa's loyal heart was shown in his reforms against idolatry and state-sanctioned perversion, and in his restoration of certain **silver and gold utensils** to the temple.

i. **There was no war until the thirty-**

**fifth year of the reign of Asa:** "For though there were continual skirmishes between Asa and Baasha and their people *all their days*, 1Ki. 15:16, yet it did not break forth into an open war till Asa's thirty-fifth year; i.e. till that was

ended." (Poole) © 2006 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** He met Asa and told him, "Listen to me, Asa and all Judah and Benjamin! The LORD is with you when you are loyal to him. If you seek him, he will respond to you, but if you reject him, he will reject you. **3** For a long time Israel had no true God, or priest to instruct them, or law. **4**

Because of their distress, they turned back to the LORD God of Israel. They sought him and he responded to them.

**5** In those days no one could travel safely, for total chaos had overtaken all the people of the surrounding lands. **6**

One nation was crushed by another, and one city by another, for God caused them to be in great turmoil. **7** But as for you, be strong and don't get discouraged, for your work will be rewarded."

**8** When Asa heard these words and the prophecy of Oded the prophet, he was encouraged. He removed the detestable idols from the entire land of Judah and Benjamin and from the cities he had seized in the Ephraimite hill country. He repaired the altar of the LORD

in front of the porch of the LORD's temple.

**9** He assembled all Judah and Benjamin, as well as the settlers from Ephraim, Manasseh, and Simeon who had come to live with them. Many people from Israel had come there to live when they saw that the LORD his God was with him. **10**

They assembled in Jerusalem in the third month of the fifteenth year of Asa's reign. **11** At that time they sacrificed to the LORD some of the plunder they had brought back, including 700 head of cattle and 7,000

sheep. **12** They solemnly agreed to seek the LORD God of their ancestors with their whole heart and being. **13**

Anyone who would not seek the LORD God of Israel would be executed, whether they were young or old, male or female.

**14** They swore their allegiance to the LORD, shouting their approval loudly and sounding trumpets and horns. **15** All Judah was happy about the oath, because they made the

vow with their whole heart. They willingly sought the LORD and he responded to them. He made them secure on every side.

**16** King Asa also removed Maacah his grandmother from her position as queen mother because she had made a loathsome Asherah pole. Asa cut down her Asherah pole and crushed and burned it in the Kidron Valley. **17** The high places were not eliminated from Israel, yet Asa was wholeheartedly devoted to the LORD throughout his lifetime. **18** He brought the holy items that his father and he had made into God's temple, including the silver, gold, and other articles.

**19** There was no more war until the thirty-fifth year of Asa's reign.

**1** In the thirty-sixth year of Asa's reign, King Baasha of Israel attacked Judah, and he established Ramah as a military outpost to prevent anyone from leaving or entering the land of King Asa of Judah.

Guzik - 2 Chronicles 16:1-14

## ***2 Chronicles 16 - Asa's Disappointing End***

A. A treaty with Syria.

1. (1-3) Asa makes a treaty with Syria to strengthen himself against Israel.

In the thirty-sixth year of the reign of Asa, Baasha king of Israel came up against Judah and built Ramah, that he might let none go out or come in to Asa king of Judah. Then Asa brought silver and gold from the treasuries of the house of the LORD and of the king's house, and sent to Ben-Hadad king of Syria, who dwelt in Damascus, saying, " *Let there be a treaty between you and me, as there was between my father and your father. Here, I have sent you silver and gold; come, break your treaty with Baasha king of Israel, so that he will withdraw from me.*"

a. **Baasha king of Israel came up against Judah, and built Ramah, that he might let none go out or come in to Asa king of Judah:** This continues the struggle for

dominance between the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah.

Baasha gained the upper hand in the days of Asa because he effectively blocked a main route into Judah at the city of Ramah. He hoped this military and economic pressure on Judah would force Asa into significant concessions.

i. " *Baasha's* aim in fortifying *Ramah* was probably to prevent access to Jerusalem for religious or trade reasons. Ramah is usually identified with er-Ram, on the main road just five miles north of Jerusalem." (Selman)

b. **Asa brought silver and gold from the treasuries of the house of the LORD and of the king's house, and sent to Ben-Hadad king of Syria:** Asa used this treasure to buy the favor of Ben-Hadad of Syria, so that he would withdraw support from Israel. Apparently, Baasha of Israel could not stand against Judah by himself and he needed the support of Syria.

i. "I will say nothing about what belonged to his own house. He might do as he liked with that so long as he did not spend it upon sin, but he took of the treasure that belonged to the house of the Lord, and gave it to Benhadad to bribe him to break his league

with Bassha, and be in league with himself.

Thus God was robbed that the unbelieving king might find help in an arm of flesh." (Spurgeon)

c. **Let there be a treaty between you and me, as there was between my father and your father:** Asa was trying to keep the way open for pilgrims from the northern kingdom to come to Jerusalem, and this was a noble goal.

His method was completely wrong. He gave treasure from the **house of the LORD** to a pagan king, and he made a **treaty** with that king.

i. Asa seems to have forgotten that his covenant was with God, not with a pagan

king. Under the covenant they made with God, the LORD was responsible to protect Judah. Now they put their *treasure* and their *trust* into a pagan king.

ii. Asa would find that Ben-Hadad and Syria were worse enemies than Israel.

iii. "The power of Ethiopia was broken before him, and Judah's armies returned

laden with the spoil. You would not have thought that a man who could perform that grand action would become, a little after, full of unbelief; but the greatest faith of

yesterday will not give us confidence for today, unless the fresh springs which are in

God shall overflow again." (Spurgeon)

iv. "But this was a smaller trouble

altogether, and somehow, I fancy, it was

because it was a smaller trouble Asa thought that he could manage it very well himself by the help of an arm of flesh. In the case of the invasion by countless hordes of Ethiopians, Asa must have felt that it was of no use calling in Ben-hadad, the king of

Syria, or asking any of the nations to help him, for with all their help he would not have been equal to the tremendous struggle.

Therefore he was driven to God. But this being a smaller trial, he does not seem to have been so thoroughly divorced from confidence in man." (Spurgeon)

v. "Here good Asa began to decline; which was the worse in him, because in his old

age, after so great a victory, and so strict a covenant to cleave close to the

Lord." (Trapp)

2. (4-6) The success of Asa's plan.

So Ben-Hadad heeded King Asa, and sent the

captains of his armies against the cities of Israel.

They attacked Ijon, Dan, Abel Maim, and all the storage cities of Naphtali. Now it happened, when Baasha heard *it*, that he stopped building Ramah and ceased his work. Then King Asa took all Judah, and they carried away the stones and timber of Ramah, which Baasha had used for building; and with them he built Geba and Mizpah.

a. **So Ben-Hadad heeded King Asa, and sent the captains of his armies against the cities of Israel:** The pagan king Ben-Hadad did have some power, and because of the treasure and under the treaty with Asa, he used that power on behalf of Asa.

i. " *Store cities* is 'Kineroth' in 1Ki. 15:20, which became Genneseret in the post-exilic period (Josephus, *Jewish Wars*, 2.573)." (Selman)

b. **Now it happened, when Baasha heard it, that he stopped building Ramah and ceased his work:** Because of the intervention of the King of Syria, **Baasha** king of Israel stopped his work of building the fortress city of **Ramah** to keep the faithful of Israel from visiting Jerusalem and Judah. We could say that Asa's trust in a pagan king *worked*.

i. "Now, many people in the world judge actions by their immediate results. If a

Christian does a wrong thing, and it prospers, then at once they conclude he was justified in doing it; but, ah! Brethren, this is a poor, blind way of judging the actions of men and the providence of God. Do you not know that there are devil's providences as

well as God's providences?" (Spurgeon) ii. "Things which appear successful may be in the life of faith most disastrous." (Morgan) B. God's rebuke to King Asa and the king's response.

1. (7-9) The word from Hanani the Seer.

And at that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah, and said to him: "Because you have relied on the king of Syria, and have not relied on the LORD your God, therefore the army of the king of Syria has escaped from your hand.

Were the Ethiopians and the Lubim not a huge army with very many chariots and horsemen?

Yet, because you relied on the LORD, He delivered them into your hand. For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of *those* whose heart *is* loyal to Him. In this you have done foolishly; therefore from now on you shall have wars."

a. **Hanani the seer:** We don't know much about this prophet, other than his bold word to King Asa here, and that his son was also a prophet who spoke to Baasha the king of Israel (1Ki. 16:1, 16:7) and to Jehoshaphat king of Judah (2Ch. 19:2).

b. **Because you have relied on the king of Syria, and have not relied on the LORD**

**your God, therefore the army of the king of Syria has escaped from your hand:** This was a complete surprise to Asa. He believed that the main enemy was *Israel*, because of King Baasha's aggressive building of the Ramah fortress. He succeeded in gaining Syria's help against Baasha and Israel, but he failed to see what God saw: that the bigger enemy was Syria, and God wanted to give him victory over the greater enemy.

i. Compromise blinds us to who our true enemies are and it leads us into alliances with those whom God would rather give us victory over.

c. **Because you relied on the LORD, He**

**delivered them into your hand:** God wanted Asa to remember the great victories of the past.

Asa failed to remember that the same God who gave him victory over a greater enemy (**the Ethiopians**) was able to

also give him victory over the lesser enemy, Syria.

**d. For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose**

**heart is loyal to Him:** The Prophet Hanani's message was clear. God *looks* for ways to defend and show his strength on behalf of those who are committed to Him. Asa's fear that God could not be trusted with the defense of Israel was foolish and wrong; God *wanted* to show His strength of behalf of His trusting people.

i. "The Hebrew word for 'run to and fro' is

signifieth, not to take a light view, but to search narrowly into the nature and the course of things." (Trapp)

ii. "What an exquisite thought is suggested by the allusion to the eyes of the Lord

running to and fro throughout the whole

earth! At a glance He takes in our position; not a sorrow, trial, or temptation visits us without exciting his notice and loving sympathy. In all the whole wide earth there is not one spot so lonely, one heart so

darkened, as to escape those eyes." (Meyer) iii. The issue was not the *strength* of God or His *willingness* to use that strength on behalf of His people. The issue was the *loyalty* of the heart of Asa and the people of the Kingdom of Judah.

**e. Therefore from now on you shall have**

**Wars:** Because of Asa's foolish trust in a pagan king and his rejection of God as their defender, he will bring more **Wars** upon himself and the Kingdom of Judah.

i. "At one stroke Asa thereby sacrificed the results of his own piety (cf. on 2Ch. 15:18) and of God's blessing (2Ch. 14:13-14); he induced a pagan ruler to an act of perfidy (2Ch. 16:3); precipitated a pattern of Syrian intervention into the affairs of Israel that would have disastrous results throughout the succeeding century (cf. 2Ki. 10:32-33;

12:17-18); and in the most serious deviation of all, he departed from the Lord by placing his primary trust in 'the arm of flesh' (Jer.

17:5)." (Payne)

2. (10) Asa rejects the message from Hanani.

Then Asa was angry with the seer, and put him in prison, for *he was* enraged at him because of this. And Asa oppressed *some* of the people at that time.

a. **Then Asa was angry with the seer, and put him in prison:** Instead of taking this word from God to heart and humbling himself, King Asa attacked the messenger. Instead of being humbled he was **enraged**.

i. Asa shows us the tragedy of a man who rules well and seeks the LORD for many years, yet fails in a significant challenge of his faith and then refuses to hear God's correction.

ii. "The precise form of Hanani's punishment is unknown, though he was probably detained in some kind of jail (lit., 'house of stocks'; cf. NIV, *prison*; the word for 'prison' in 18:26 is different." (Selman)

b. **And Asa oppressed some of the people**

**at that time:** He struck out against not only Hanani, but also against others who were committed to God and could see the error of the king's ways. As a man in compromise and

unbelief, the presence of those truly loyal to God was convicting and oppressive to Asa.

3. (11-14) The sad end of the otherwise promising reign of King Asa of Judah.

Note that the acts of Asa, first and last, are indeed written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel. And in the thirty-ninth year of his reign, Asa became diseased in his feet, and his malady was severe; yet in his disease he did not seek the LORD, but the physicians. So Asa rested with his fathers; he

died in the forty-first year of his reign. They buried him in his own tomb, which he had made for himself in the City of David; and they laid him in the bed which was filled with spices and various ingredients prepared in a mixture of ointments. They made a very great burning for him.

**a. Asa became diseased in his feet, and his malady was severe:** This happened after he refused to hear God's word of correction through Hanani the seer. Some think that Asa's foot ailment was gout, "but gout was

uncommon in Palestine and ancient Egypt and it is more likely, in view of Asa's age, the severity of the disease and death within two years, to have been a peripheral obstructive vascular disease with ensuing gangrene."

(Wiseman) i. "He had a strong and long fit of the *gout*; this is most likely." (Clarke) ii. "As he had laid the good prophet by the heels in his bed; to him therefore he should have sought for release; since natural means in this case could do him little good." (Trapp)

**b. Yet in his disease he did not seek the LORD, but the physicians:** The closing chapters of the life of King Asa are discouraging.

Here was a man involved in a notable period of trust in God, great victory, and the renewal of God's covenant with His people. All in all, Asa was a good man who did not finish well. The last years of his life were marked by unbelief, hardness against God, oppression against his people, and disease. Age and time do not necessarily make us better; they only do if we continue to follow God in faith.

i. He refused to rely on God in the face of the threat against him from Israel and Syria; he refused to rely on God in His loving correction from Hanani the seer. It is no wonder that he also refused to rely on God regarding his diseased feet at the end of his life. This was a powerful warning to both the first readers of the Chronicler and to us.

ii. Overall, the Bible is positive about the role of physicians and medical care (Col. 4:14, Act. 28:9, Jam. 5:14-15, and 1Ti. 5:23).

However, it is never right to seek **the physicians** *instead of the LORD*. One may rather trust the LORD and when appropriate, see His hand move through a physician.

iii. "It is not wrong to send for physicians, it is quite right; but it is very wrong to send for physicians in place of crying to God, thus putting the human agency before the divine; besides, it is very probable that these physicians were only heathenish conjurors, necromancers, and pretenders to magical arts, and could not be consulted without implicating the patient in their evil practices." (Spurgeon)

iv. Morgan on Asa: "It is the record of a faulty life, but one in which the deepest thing, that of desire, was right; and so it is the record of a life, the influence of which was a blessing rather than a curse. It is a revealing story."

**c. They made a very great burning for him:**

"Such fires were customary for royal funerals ( *cf.* Jer. 34:5), and were not for cremating the body but as a sign of honour ( *cf.* 2Ch.

21:19)." (Selman)

i. "He that could drive out that huge army of the Ethiopians, could not drive away death." (Trapp)

© 2006 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** Asa took all the silver and gold that was left in the treasuries of the LORD's temple and of the royal palace and sent it to King Ben Hadad of Syria, ruler in Damascus, along with this message: **3** "I want to make a treaty with you, like the one our fathers made. See, I have sent you silver and gold. Break your treaty with King Baasha

of Israel, so he will retreat from my land.” **4** Ben Hadad accepted King Asa’s offer and ordered his army commanders to attack the cities of Israel. They conquered Ijon, Dan, Abel Maim, and all the storage cities of Naphtali. **5** When Baasha heard the news, he stopped fortifying Ramah and abandoned the project. **6** King Asa ordered all the men of Judah to carry away the stones and wood that Baasha had used to build Ramah. He used the materials to build up Geba and Mizpah.

**7** At that time Hanani the prophet visited King Asa of Judah and said to him: “Because you relied on the king of Syria and did not rely on the LORD your God, the army of the king of Syria has escaped from your hand. **8** Did not the Cushites and Libyans have a huge army with chariots and a very large number of horsemen? But when you relied on the LORD, he handed them over to you! **9**

Certainly the LORD watches the whole earth carefully and is ready to strengthen those who are devoted to him. You have acted foolishly in this matter; from now on you will have war.

**10** Asa was so angry at the prophet, he put him in jail. Asa also oppressed some of the people at that time.

**11** The events of Asa’s reign, from start to finish, are recorded in the Scroll of the Kings of Judah and Israel. **12**

In the thirty-ninth year of his reign, Asa developed a foot disease. Though his disease was severe, he did not seek the LORD, but only the doctors. **13** Asa passed away in the forty-first year of his reign. **14** He was buried in the tomb he had carved out in the City of David. They laid him to rest on a bier covered with spices and assorted mixtures of ointments. They made a huge bonfire to honor him.

**1** His son Jehoshaphat replaced him as king and solidified his rule over Israel.

Guzik - 2 Chronicles 17:1-19

***2 Chronicles 17 - Features of Jehoshaphat's***

# Reign

A. How King Jehoshaphat pleased God.

1. (1-4) The personal spiritual commitment of King Jehoshaphat.

Then Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his place, and strengthened himself against Israel. And he placed troops in all the fortified cities of Judah, and set garrisons in the land of Judah and in the cities of Ephraim which Asa his father had taken.

Now the LORD was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the former ways of his father David; he did not seek the Baals, but sought the God of his father, and walked in His commandments and not according to the acts of Israel.

a. **Then Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his place:** Asa was generally a good king (though he did not finish well) and Jehoshaphat his son followed in his footsteps and **the LORD was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the former ways of his father David.**

i. " *In the first ways*, which David walked in before he fell into those horrid sins of murder and adultery." (Trapp)

ii. "Have you never noticed the career of David? What a happy life David's was up to one point! . . . But that hour when he

walked on the roof of his house, and saw Bathsheba, and gave way to his unholy desires, put an end to the happy days of David . . . You recognize him as the same man, but his voice is broken; his music is deep bass, he cannot reach one high notes of the scale. From the hour in which he sinned he began to sorrow more and more. So will it be with us if we are not

watchful." (Spurgeon)

b. **Strengthened himself against Israel:** Jehoshaphat recognized that the northern kingdom was a danger to Judah militarily,

politically, and especially *spiritually*. He therefore strengthened the defenses against this threat and specifically **did not according to the acts of Israel**.

i. In his presentation of the history of the kings of Judah, the Chronicler constantly brings the contrast and the challenge before the readers of his day and ours: "Your destiny, as an individual and as a nation, can either be like that of Judah or Israel. You should follow the example of those who **did not according to the acts of Israel**."

2. (5-6) The blessing upon his reign.

Therefore the LORD established the kingdom in his hand; and all Judah gave presents to Jehoshaphat, and he had riches and honor in abundance. And his heart took delight in the ways of the LORD; moreover he removed the high places and wooden images from Judah.

a. **Therefore the LORD established the**

**kingdom in his hand:** This was no small accomplishment. In those days kings and kingdoms were fragile and under constant

threat. Yet if the descendants of David would seek God first, He promised to take care of their security – and God makes the same promise to His people today (Mat. 6:33).

b. **All Judah gave presents to Jehoshaphat, and he had riches and honor in abundance:** Because Jehoshaphat trusted God, God lifted him up and exalted him as a king. As his **heart took delight in the ways of the LORD**, the LORD gave him the desires of his heart (Psa. 37:4).

c. **Moreover he removed the high places and wooden images from Judah:** 1Ki. 22:43

says that Jehoshaphat *did not* remove the high places. Adam Clarke explains: "In 2Ch. 17:6, it is expressly said, that he

*did take away the high places.* Allowing that the text is right in 2

Chronicles the two places may be easily recognized. There were *two kinds of high places* in the land: 1. Those used for *idolatrous* purposes. 2. Those that were *consecrated to God*, and were used before the temple was built. The former he did take away, the latter he did not."

i. "They may also witness to the deep hold of the Canaanite and syncretic forms of religion on ordinary Israelites. Popular views and practices are often quite different from pronouncements by religious authorities." (Selman)

B. The strength of Jehoshaphat's kingdom.

1. (7-10) The spiritual strength of the kingdom: Jehoshaphat brings the Word of God to the people.

Also in the third year of his reign he sent his leaders, Ben-Hail, Obadiah, Zechariah, Nethanel, and Michaiah, to teach in the cities of Judah. And with them *he sent* Levites: Shemaiah, Nethaniah, Zebadiah, Asahel, Shemiramoth, Jehonathan, Adonijah, Tobijah, and Tobadonijah; the Levites; and with them Elishama and Jehoram, the priests. So they taught in Judah, and *had* the Book of the Law of the LORD with them; they went throughout all the cities of Judah and taught the people. And the fear of the LORD fell on all the kingdoms of the lands that *were* around Judah, so that they did not make war against Jehoshaphat.

a. **To teach in the cities of Judah:** These

"teaching priests" have been mentioned by the Chronicler before (2Ch. 15:3). They had the important role of bringing the word of God to the people, especially those who lived outside of Jerusalem.

b. **They taught in Judah, and had the Book of the Law of the LORD with them; they went throughout all the cities of Judah**

**and taught the people:** This was the wisest and best policy a security-conscious king of Judah could promote. Because Jehoshaphat sought God first, God sent **fear** upon

the neighboring kingdoms, **so that they did not make war against Jehoshaphat.**

i. "By this little band of princes, Levites and priests, sixteen in all, Jehoshaphat did more toward impressing the surrounding nations with a sense of his power than the largest

and best-equipped standing army could have secured to him." (Knapp)

ii. "The method adopted was what in these modern times we might describe as the holding of Special Missions throughout the

cities of Judah, for the specific purpose of proclaiming and interpreting 'the book of the law of Jehovah.'" (Morgan) iii.

"No better service can be rendered to the nation than that of proclaiming the Word of Jehovah to the people, in cities, towns, villages, and hamlets. By such proclamation the heart of the people may be turned to Jehovah, and so He be enabled to do for

them all that is in His heart." (Morgan) iv. "Thus the nation became thoroughly instructed in their duty to *God*, to the *king*, and to each *other*. They became, therefore, as *one man*; and against a people thus united, on such *principles*, no enemy could be successful." (Clarke) v. Clarke observed how a similar itinerant

ministry in the days of John Wesley and his followers impacted Britain: "Such an itinerant ministry established in these

kingdoms for upwards of *fourscore years*, teaching the pure, unadulterated doctrines of the Gospel, with the propriety and

necessity of obedience to the laws, has been the principle means, in the hand of God, of preserving the lands from those convulsions and revolutions that have ruined and nearly dissolved the European continent."

vi. "It is said (2Ch. 17:2) Jehoshaphat place forces in all the fenced cities; yet it is not said thereupon that 'the fear of the

Lord fell upon the neighbour nations.' But when he had established a preaching ministry in all the cities, then his enemies had a fear, and made no war." (Trapp) 2. (11-19)

The international strength of  
Jehoshaphat's kingdom.

Also *some* of the Philistines brought Jehoshaphat presents and silver as tribute; and the Arabians brought him flocks, seven thousand seven hundred rams and seven thousand seven

hundred male goats. So Jehoshaphat became increasingly powerful, and he built fortresses and storage cities in Judah. He had much property in the cities of Judah; and the men of war, mighty men of valor, *were* in Jerusalem. These *are* their numbers, according to their fathers' houses. Of Judah, the captains of thousands: Adnah the captain, and with him three hundred thousand mighty men of valor; and next to him *was* Jehohanan the captain, and with him two hundred and eighty thousand; and next to him *was* Amasiah the son of Zichri, who willingly offered himself to the LORD, and with him two hundred thousand mighty men of valor. Of Benjamin: Eliada a mighty man of valor, and with him two hundred thousand men armed with bow and shield; and next to him *was* Jehozabad, and with him one hundred and eighty thousand prepared for war. These served the king, besides those the king put in the fortified cities throughout all Judah.

a. **Some of the Philistines brought**

# Jehoshaphat presents and silver as

**tribute; and the Arabians brought him flocks:**

Jehoshaphat's commitment to personal and public godliness meant that God exalted his kingdom above the neighboring nations, even as God promised in Deu. 28:1-13.

b. **These served the king:** The true treasure of Jehoshaphat's kingdom was not numbered only in security or material things, but also in the dedicated and courageous men he had surrounding him, these **mighty men of valor**.

i. **Amasiah the son of Zichri, who willingly offered himself to the LORD:** "Amasiah is a man of whom we do not know anything beyond this – he 'willingly offered himself unto the Lord.' There must have been a turning-point in his career, a time when first he knew the grace of God, which wrought such a change in him. There must have been a waking up to the feeling that God deserved his love and his life." (Spurgeon)

ii. Amasiah was a ready servant of the Lord; this particularly notable because he did it in an otherwise secular calling.

- No one had to press him into service.
- No one had to seek him out for service.
- No one had to look after him once he had begun serving.
- No one had to lead him.

iii. "There is no lawful occupation in which a man cannot thoroughly serve the Lord. It is a great privilege and blessing to be set apart to the work of winning souls; but we must never separate that work from all the rest of the callings of life, as though it alone were sacred, and all the rest were secular and almost sinful. Serve God where you are." (Spurgeon)

*© 2006 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission* **2** He placed troops in all of Judah's fortified cities and posted garrisons throughout the land of Judah and in the cities of Ephraim that his father Asa had seized.

**3** The LORD was with Jehoshaphat because he followed in his ancestor David's footsteps at the beginning of his reign. He did not seek the Baals, **4** but instead sought the God of his ancestors and obeyed his commands, unlike the Israelites. **5** The LORD made his kingdom secure; all Judah brought tribute to Jehoshaphat, and he became very wealthy and greatly respected. **6** He was committed to following the LORD; he even removed the high places and Asherah poles from Judah.

**7** In the third year of his reign he sent his officials Ben-Hail, Obadiah, Zechariah, Nethanel, and Micaiah to teach in the cities of Judah. **8** They were accompanied by the Levites Shemaiah, Nethaniah, Zebadiah, Asahel, Shemiramoth, Jehonathan, Adonijah, Tobijah, and Tob-Adonijah, and by the priests Elishama and Jehoram. **9**

They taught throughout Judah, taking with them the scroll of the law of the LORD. They traveled to all the cities of Judah and taught the people.

**10** The LORD put fear into all the kingdoms surrounding Judah; they did not make war with Jehoshaphat. **11** Some of the Philistines brought Jehoshaphat tribute, including a load of silver. The Arabs brought him 7,700 rams and 7,700 goats from their flocks.

**12** Jehoshaphat's power kept increasing. He built fortresses and storage cities throughout Judah. **13** He had many supplies stored in the cities of Judah and an army of skilled warriors stationed in Jerusalem. **14** These were their divisions by families: There were a thousand officers from Judah. Adnah the commander led 300,000 skilled warriors, **15** Jehochanan the commander led 280,000, **16** and

Amasiah son of Zikri, who volunteered to serve the LORD, led 200,000 skilled warriors.

**17** From Benjamin, Eliada, a skilled warrior, led 200,000 men who were equipped with bows and shields, **18** and Jehozabad led 180,000 trained warriors.

**19** These were the ones who served the king, besides those whom the king placed in the fortified cities throughout Judah.

**1** Jehoshaphat was very wealthy and greatly respected. He made an alliance by marriage with Ahab, Guzik - 2 Chronicles 18:1-34

***2 Chronicles 18 - Jehoshaphat, Ahab, and***

# Micaiah

A. Jehoshaphat goes to Samaria, the capital city of the northern kingdom of Israel.

1. (1) Jehoshaphat's unwise alliance with Ahab.

Jehoshaphat had riches and honor in abundance; and by marriage he allied himself with Ahab.

a. **Jehoshaphat had riches and honor in**

**abundance:** Because of his personal godliness (2Ch. 17:1-4) and public godliness (2Ch. 17:7-10), God blessed Jehoshaphat and exalted him among neighboring nations.

b. **By marriage he allied himself with**

**Ahab:** This manner of linking kingdoms by the bond of marriage was common in the ancient world, yet it was unwise policy for Jehoshaphat.

The wisest strategy for the protection of his kingdom was *obedience* instead of compromise with the ungodly King Ahab of Israel and his wife, Queen Jezebel.

i. 1Ki. 16:29-33 tells us just how bad Ahab was. He introduced the worship of

completely new, pagan gods. In his

disobedience Jeroboam (the first king of the kingdom of the northern tribes) said, "I will worship the LORD, but do it my way." Ahab said, "I want to forget about the LORD

completely and worship Baal."

ii. Ahab was greatly influenced towards

wickedness by his Phoenician wife Jezebel.

"He was a weak man, the tool of a crafty, unscrupulous, and cruel woman: and some

of the worst crimes that have ever been

committed have been wrought by weak

men, at the instigation of worse - but

stronger - spirits than themselves." (Meyer) 2. (2-3) Ahab sets his eyes upon Ramoth-Gilead.

After some years he went down to *visit* Ahab in Samaria; and Ahab killed sheep and oxen in abundance for him and the people who were with him, and persuaded him to go up *with him* to Ramoth Gilead. So Ahab king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat king of Judah, "Will you go with me *against* Ramoth Gilead?" And he answered him, "I *am* as you *are*, and my people as your people; *we will be* with you in the war."

**a. And persuaded him to go up with him to Ramoth in Gilead:** Previously, the King of Syria promised to return certain cities to Israel (1Ki. 20:34) in exchange for leniency after defeat in battle. Apparently this was a city that Ben-Hadad never returned to Israel and it was in a strategically important location.

**b. Will you go with me against Ramoth**

**Gilead?** King Ahab of Israel asked King Jehoshaphat of Judah to help him in this dispute against Syria. This made some sense, because Ramoth-Gilead was only 40 miles from Jerusalem.

3. (4-8) Jehoshaphat proposes that they seek God in the matter.

And Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel,

"Please inquire for the word of the LORD today."

Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, four hundred men, and said to them,

"Shall we go to war against Ramoth Gilead, or shall I refrain?" And they said, "Go up, for God will deliver it into the king's hand." But Jehoshaphat said, "*Is there* not still a prophet of the LORD here, that we may inquire of Him?" So the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "*There is* still one man by whom we may inquire of the LORD; but I hate him, because he never prophesies good concerning me, but always evil.

He *is* Micaiah the son of Imla." And Jehoshaphat said, "Let not the king say such things!" Then the king of Israel called

one *of his* officers and said, "Bring Micaiah the son of Imla quickly!"

**a. Please inquire for the word of the LORD**

**today:** Considering the generally adversarial relationship between Ahab and the prophets of Yahweh, this was a bold request of Jehoshaphat to ask of Ahab. It wasn't surprising that Ahab picked prophets who would tell them that they wanted to hear.

i. "Though Jehoshaphat had already committed himself to the enterprise (2Ch. 18:3), and though he went on to disregard the guidance that was given him (2Ch.

18:28), he still retained the religion of Yahweh to the extent that he insisted on

seeking 'the counsel of the Lord.'" (Payne) b. **Go up, for**

**God will deliver it into the king's hand:** When Ahab gathered the prophets, they were not faithful prophets of the LORD. These were prophets happy to please their kings, and to tell them what they wanted to hear. Jehoshaphat still wanted to hear from a prophet of Yahweh, the LORD (**Is there not still a prophet of the LORD here, that we may inquire of Him?** ).

i. Trapp described this gather of prophets as, "An ecumenical council."

c. **I hate him, because he never prophesies good concerning me, but always evil:** Ahab hated the messenger because of the message.

His real conflict was with God, but he focused his hatred against the prophet Micaiah. Yet he was willing to listen to the King of Judah when he advised that Ahab *should* listen to the Prophet Micaiah.

4. (9-11) An object lesson from the unfaithful prophets.

The king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah, clothed in *their* robes, sat each on his throne; and they sat at a threshing floor at the entrance of the gate of Samaria; and all the prophets prophesied before them. Now

Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah had made horns of iron for himself; and he said, "Thus says the LORD: 'With these you shall gore the Syrians until they are destroyed.'" And all the prophets prophesied so, saying, "Go up to Ramoth Gilead and prosper, for the LORD will deliver *it* into the king's hand."

a. **Sat each on his throne, and they sat at a threshing floor at the entrance of the gate of Samaria:** This illustrates the ancient custom of holding court and making decisions at the gates of the city. There were even thrones for high officials to sit on at the gates of the city of Samaria.

b. **Thus says the LORD:** These unfaithful prophets (such as **Zedekiah**) prophesied in the name of the LORD, but they did not prophesy truthfully. Many commentators believe these prophets were *pagan* prophets, perhaps representatives of Asherah or other pagan gods or goddesses. Yet they clearly prophesied in the name of **the LORD**. It is best to regard these *not as pagan prophets*, but unfaithful prophets to the true God.

i. Perhaps these were true followers of Yahweh who were seduced by Ahab's sincere but shallow repentance three years before (1Ki. 21:27-29). After that, they began to align with Ahab uncritically. Three years later they were willing to prophesy lies to Ahab if that was what he wanted to hear.

c. **With these you shall gore the Syrians until they are destroyed:** Zedekiah used a familiar tool of ancient prophets - the object lesson. He used **horns of iron** to illustrate the thrust of two powerful forces, armies that would rout the Syrians. Zedekiah had the agreement of 400 other prophets (**all the prophets prophesied so**).

i. "Dramas of this kind were a typical method of prophetic revelation ( *cf.* Jeremiah 27-28), based on this occasion on the *horns* as a symbol of strength." (Selman) ii. This must have been a vivid and

entertaining presentation. We can be certain that every eye was on Zedekiah when he used the **horns of iron** to powerfully illustrate the point. It was certainly persuasive to have 400 prophets speak in agreement on one issue. No matter how powerful and persuasive the presentation, *their message was unfaithful.*

5. (12-15) The prophecy of Micaiah, the faithful prophet.

Then the messenger who had gone to call Micaiah spoke to him, saying, "Now listen, the words of the prophets with one accord encourage the king. Therefore please let your word be like *the word of* one of them, and speak encouragement." And Micaiah said, "As the LORD lives, whatever my God says, that I will speak."

Then he came to the king; and the king said to him, "Micaiah, shall we go to war against Ramoth Gilead, or shall I refrain?" And he said, "Go and prosper, and they shall be delivered into your hand!" So the king said to him, "How many times shall I make you swear that you tell me nothing but the truth in the name of the LORD?"

a. **As the LORD lives, whatever my God**

**says, that I will speak:** The assistants of King Ahab tried to persuade Micaiah to speak in agreement with the 400 other prophets. Micaiah assured him that he would simply repeat what God said to him.

i. This was a dramatic scene. Micaiah was brought out from prison (1Ki. 22:26 indicates that he came from prison). We see a prophet in rags and chains stand before two kings, ready to speak on behalf of the LORD.

ii. "This might have daunted the good prophet, but that he had lately seen the Lord sitting upon His throne with all the host of heaven standing by Him, and

hence he so boldly looked in the face these two kings in their majesty; for he beheld them as so many mice." (Trapp)

b. **Go and prosper, and they shall be delivered into your hand!** When Micaiah said this, his tone was probably mocking and sarcastic. He said similar *words* to the 400 unfaithful prophets, but delivered a completely different *message*.

c. **How many times shall I make you swear that you tell me nothing but the truth in the name of the LORD?** King Ahab recognized the mocking tone of Micaiah's prophecy and knew it contradicted the message of the 400 prophets. He demanded that Micaiah tell **nothing but the truth** - which Ahab believed and hoped was the message of the 400 other prophets.

6. (16-17) Micaiah speaks the true prophecy from the LORD. Then he said, "I saw all Israel scattered on the mountains, as sheep that have no shepherd. And the LORD said, 'These have no master. Let each return to his house in peace.'" And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "Did I not tell you he would not prophesy good concerning me, but evil?"

a. **I saw all Israel scattered on the mountains, as sheep that have no shepherd:** Micaiah was challenged to tell the truth, and now he changed his tone from mocking to serious. He said that not only would Israel be defeated, but also that their leader (**shepherd**) would perish.

b. **Did I not tell you he would not prophesy good concerning me, but evil?** King Ahab said that he wanted the truth - but he couldn't handle the truth. What he didn't consider was that though Micaiah prophesied **evil** towards Ahab, he prophesied *truth*.

i. "Ahab knew in his heart that Micaiah would not fear or flatter him, but only

declare the word of Jehovah. This he construed into personal hatred . . . Hatred of the messenger of God is clear evidence of willful wickedness." (Morgan)

7. (18-22) Micaiah reveals the inspiration behind the 400 prophets.

Then *Micaiah* said, "Therefore hear the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing on His right hand and His left. And the LORD said, 'Who will persuade Ahab king of Israel to go up, that he may fall at Ramoth Gilead?' So one spoke in this manner, and another spoke in that manner. Then a spirit came forward and stood before the LORD, and said, 'I will persuade him.' The LORD said to him, 'In what way?' So he said, 'I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.'

And *the Lord* said, 'You shall persuade *him* and also prevail; go out and do so.' Therefore look!

The LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouth of these prophets of yours, and the LORD has declared disaster against you."

a. **I saw the LORD sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing:** King Ahab and others at the court found it hard to explain how one prophet could be right and 400

prophets could be wrong. Here Micaiah explained the message of the 400 prophets. It is possible that this was just a parable, but it is more likely that Micaiah had an accurate prophetic glimpse into the heavenly drama behind these events.

b. **On His right hand and His left:** Since the **right hand** was the place of favor, this may indicate that God spoke to the *combined host of heaven*, both faithful and fallen angelic beings.

i. Some people forget that Satan and his fellow fallen angels have access to heaven

(Job. 1:6, Rev. 12:10). There is a well-intentioned but mistaken teaching that *God can allow no evil in His presence*, meaning that Satan and other fallen angels could not be in His presence. These passages show that God *can* allow evil in His presence, though He can have no *fellowship* with evil and one day all evil will be removed from His presence (Rev. 20:14-15).

c. **Who will persuade Ahab king of Israel to go up, that he may fall at Ramoth Gilead?** God wanted to bring judgment against Ahab, so He asked this group of **the host of heaven** for a volunteer to lead Ahab into battle.

d. **I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets:** Apparently, one of the *fallen* angels volunteered for this task. Since Ahab wanted to be deceived, God would give him what He wanted, using a willing fallen angel who worked through willing unfaithful prophets.

i. "The Hebrew that underlies the phrase rendered 'a spirit' (came forward) reads literally, 'the (well-known) spirit,' i.e., Satan the tempter (as in Job. 1:6-12). . . .

Apparently Michaiah seems to assumed among his hearers a working knowledge of the Book of Job." (Payne)

ii. "This strange incident can only be understood against the background of other

Old Testament passages, especially Deu.

13:11 and Eze. 14:1-11. both these

passages speak of people being enticed by

false prophets, in each case as a result of a link with idolatry." (Selman)

8. (24-28) The reaction of the false prophets and Ahab.

Then Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah went near and struck Micaiah on the cheek, and said,

"Which way did the spirit from the LORD go from me to speak to you?" And Micaiah said, "Indeed you shall see on that day when you go into an inner chamber to hide!" Then

the king of Israel said, "Take Micaiah, and return him to Amon the governor of the city and to Joash the king's son; and say, 'Thus says the king: "Put this *fellow* in prison, and feed him with bread of affliction and water of affliction until I return in peace.'" Then Micaiah said, "If you ever return in peace, the LORD has not spoken by me." And he said, "Take heed, all you people!"

a. **Now Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah went near and struck Micaiah on the**

**cheek:** Zedekiah responded the way many do when they are defeated in argument - he responded with violence.

b. **Put this fellow in prison:** King Ahab responded the way many tyrants do when they are confronted with the truth. Ahab wanted Micaiah imprisoned and deprived (**feed him with bread of affliction and water of affliction**).

i. "The phrase ' *bread of affliction and water of affliction*' may be translated 'bread and water of scant measure.'" (Dilday) c. **If you ever return in peace, the LORD**

**has not spoken by me:** The prophet Micaiah made one final and ultimate appeal. He was willing to be judged by whether his prophecy came to pass or not. Since he knew his words were true, it was fitting for him to cry out as they dragged him back to prison, " **Take heed, all you people!** "

B. The death of King Ahab of Israel.

1. (28-29) Jehoshaphat and Ahab go into battle.

So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went up to Ramoth Gilead. And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "I will disguise myself and go into battle; but you put on your robes."

So the king of Israel disguised himself, and they went into battle.

a. **So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went up to Ramoth Gilead:** It is easy to understand why King Ahab of Israel went to this battle; he

didn't want to believe that Micaiah's prophecy was true and wanted to courageously oppose it. It is less easy to understand why King Jehoshaphat of Judah went to this battle with Ahab. He should have believed the prophecy of Micaiah and known that the battle would end in disaster and the death of at least Ahab.

i. It may be that Jehoshaphat had a *fatalistic* attitude towards the will of God, figuring that if it all was God's will then there was nothing he or anyone else could do about it.

b. **I will disguise myself and go into battle; but you put on your robes:** Going into the battle, Ahab did not want to be identified as a king and therefore be a special target. He thought this would help protect him against Micaiah's prophecy of doom. It is more difficult to explain why Jehoshaphat agreed to go into the battle as the only clearly identified king.

Perhaps he was either not very smart or he had very great faith.

i. "Ahab pretended herein to honour Jehoshaphat, but intended to save himself, and to elude Micaiah's prophecy." (Trapp) 2. (30-34) Jehoshaphat is saved and Ahab dies in battle.

Now the king of Syria had commanded the captains of the chariots who *were* with him, saying, "Fight with no one small or great, but only with the king of Israel." So it was, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, "It *is* the king of Israel!" Therefore they surrounded him to attack; but Jehoshaphat cried out, and the LORD helped him, and God diverted them from him. For so it was, when the captains of the chariots saw that it was not the king of Israel, that they turned back from pursuing him. Now a certain man drew a bow at random, and struck the king of Israel between the joints of his armor. So he said to the driver of his chariot, "Turn around and take me out of the battle, for I am wounded." The battle increased that day, and the king of Israel propped

*himself* up in *his* chariot facing the Syrians until evening; and about the time of sunset he died.

a. **Fight with no one small or great, but only with the king of Israel:** Ahab's previous mercy to Ben-Hadad (1Ki. 20:31-34) did not win any lasting favor with the rulers of Syria. This strategy of the Syrian army made Ahab's counter-strategy of disguising himself in battle seem very wise.

i. "Thus doth the unthankful infidel repay the mercy of his late victor . . . but God had a holy hand in it." (Trapp)

b. **Jehoshaphat cried out, and the LORD**

**helped him:** Finding himself as the only identifiable king in the battle, Jehoshaphat found himself quickly in danger. He **cried out** unto the LORD and was rescued when **they turned back from pursuing him.**

c. **Now a certain man drew a bow at**

**random, and struck the king of Israel:** This seemed to be pure chance. It was a **certain man**, and he pulled his **bow at random** - but it struck as if it were a sin-seeking missile, hitting right **between the joints of his armor.** God orchestrated the unintended actions of man to result in an exercise of His judgment.

i. "Probably this man already had shot many arrows, and he went on in his simplicity, little knowing that this particular arrow was to be guided through all the confusion straight to its mark by the unerring knowledge and power of God. Yet so it was." (Morgan)

ii. "Men may secrete themselves so that other men may never find them; but when the hour of their judgment has come, God takes hold on some ordinary event and makes it the highway on which He comes to carry out His purpose. 'It just happened,' says the man of the world. 'God did it,' says the man of faith." (Morgan)

iii. "And now what joy could Ahab's black soul, ready to depart, have of his ivory house? Who had not rather be a Micaiah in the jail than Ahab in the chariot? Wicked men have the advantage of the way, godly men of the end." (Trapp)

d. **The king of Israel propped himself up in his chariot, facing the Syrians until evening:** Ahab faced the end of his life bravely, dying **propped . . . up in his chariot** to inspire his troops. When his death became known the battle was over.

i. "It appears that the Israelites and Jews maintained the fight the whole of the day; but when at evening the king died, and this was known, there was a proclamation made, probably with the consent of both Syrians and Israelites, that the war was over." (Clarke)

© 2006 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** and after several years went down to visit Ahab in Samaria. Ahab slaughtered many sheep and cattle to honor Jehoshaphat and those who came with him. He persuaded him to join in an attack against Ramoth Gilead.

**3** King Ahab of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "Will you go with me to attack Ramoth Gilead?" Jehoshaphat replied to the king of Israel, "I will support you; my army is at your disposal and will support you in battle." **4** Then Jehoshaphat added, "First seek an oracle from the LORD."

**5** So the king of Israel assembled 400 prophets and asked them, "Should we attack Ramoth Gilead or not?" They said, "Attack! God will hand it over to the king." **6** But Jehoshaphat asked, "Is there not a prophet of the LORD still here, that we may ask him?" **7** The king of Israel answered Jehoshaphat, "There is still one man through whom we can seek the LORD's will. But I despise him

because he does not prophesy prosperity for me, but always disaster. His name is Micaiah son of Imlah.

Jehoshaphat said, "The king should not say such things!" **8**

The king of Israel summoned an officer and said, "Quickly bring Micaiah son of Imlah."

**9** Now the king of Israel and King Jehoshaphat of Judah were sitting on their respective thrones, dressed in their royal robes, at the threshing floor at the entrance of the gate of Samaria. All the prophets were prophesying before them. **10**

Zedekiah son of Kenaanah made iron horns and said, "This is what the LORD says, 'With these you will gore Syria until they are destroyed!'" **11** All the prophets were prophesying

the same, saying, "Attack Ramoth Gilead! You will succeed; the LORD will hand it over to the king!" **12** Now the

messenger who went to summon Micaiah said to him, "Look, the prophets are in complete agreement that the king will succeed. Your words must agree with theirs; you must predict success!" **13** But Micaiah said, "As certainly as the LORD lives, I will say what my God tells me to say!"

**14** Micaiah came before the king and the king asked him, "Micaiah, should we attack Ramoth Gilead or not?" He answered him, "Attack! You will succeed; they will be handed over to you." **15** The king said to him, "How many

times must I make you solemnly promise in the name of the LORD to tell me only the truth?" **16** Micaiah replied, "I saw all Israel scattered on the mountains like sheep that have no shepherd. Then the LORD said, 'They have no master. They should go home in peace.'" **17** The king of Israel said to

Jehoshaphat, "Didn't I tell you he does not prophesy prosperity for me, but disaster?" **18** Micaiah said, "That

being the case, hear the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, with all the heavenly assembly

standing on his right and on his left. **19** The LORD said, 'Who will deceive King Ahab of Israel, so he will attack Ramoth Gilead and die there?' One said this and another

that. **20** Then a spirit stepped forward and stood before the LORD. He said, 'I will deceive him.' The LORD asked him, 'How?' **21** He replied, 'I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouths of all his prophets.' The LORD said, 'Deceive and overpower him. Go out and do as you have proposed.' **22** So now, look, the LORD has placed a lying spirit in the mouths of all these prophets of yours; but the LORD has decreed disaster for you." **23** Zedekiah son of Kenaanah approached, hit Micaiah on the jaw, and said, "Which way did the LORD's spirit go when he went from me to speak to you?" **24** Micaiah replied, "Look, you will see in the day when you go into an inner room to hide." **25** Then the king of Israel said, "Take Micaiah and return him to Amon the city official and Joash the king's son. **26** Say, 'This is what the king says: "Put this man in prison. Give him only a little bread and water until I return safely."'" **27** Micaiah said, "If you really do return safely, then the LORD has not spoken through me!" Then he added, "Take note, all you people."

**28** The king of Israel and King Jehoshaphat of Judah attacked Ramoth Gilead. **29** The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "I will disguise myself and then enter the battle; but you wear your royal attire." So the king of Israel disguised himself and they entered the battle. **30**

Now the king of Syria had ordered his chariot commanders, "Do not fight common soldiers or high ranking officers; fight only the king of Israel!" **31** When the chariot commanders saw Jehoshaphat, they said, "He must be the king of Israel!" So they turned and attacked him, but Jehoshaphat cried out. The LORD helped him; God lured them away from him. **32** When the chariot commanders realized he was not the king of Israel, they turned away from him. **33** Now an archer shot an arrow at random and it struck the king of Israel between the plates of his armor. The king ordered his charioteer, "Turn around and take me from the battle line, for I am wounded." **34** While the battle raged throughout the day,

the king stood propped up in his chariot opposite the Syrians. He died in the evening as the sun was setting.

**1** When King Jehoshaphat of Judah returned home safely to Jerusalem,

Guzik - 2 Chronicles 19:1-11

## **2 Chronicles 19 - Jehu's Rebuke**

A. The goodness of God to Jehoshaphat.

1. (1) He returns safely after the battle.

Then Jehoshaphat the king of Judah returned safely to his house in Jerusalem.

a. **Then Jehoshaphat the king of Judah**

**returned safely:** This was the mercy of God.

Jehoshaphat, clothed in the robes of the king targeted for death by the army of Syria, should have been killed in battle. Yet he cried out to the LORD and was preserved, returning **safely to his house in Jerusalem.**

i. "The fact that Jehoshaphat reached home *safely* is significant. It contrasts his fate with Ahab's, and testifies to God's grace given to a person who was almost destroyed by undiscerning folly." (Selman)

2. (2-3) God rebukes Jehoshaphat through Jehu the prophet.

And Jehu the son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him, and said to King Jehoshaphat, "Should you help the wicked and love those who hate the LORD? Therefore the wrath of the LORD *is* upon you. Nevertheless good things are found in you, in that you have removed the wooden images from the land, and have prepared your heart to seek God."

a. **Jehu the son of Hanani:** His father was a brave prophet, speaking to king Asa. The son Jehu also prophesied to Baasha the king of Israel (1Ki. 16:1, 16:7).

b. **Should you help the wicked and love**

**those who hate the LORD?** Jehu exposed the sin of too much love in Jehoshaphat. He

professed to love God, but he also

demonstrated love to **those who hate the**

**LORD.** He should never have entered his personal and military alliances with Ahab and the kingdom of Israel.

i. Jehoshaphat should have read and

considered Psa. 97:10: *You who love the LORD, hate evil!*

ii. " *Love* and *hate* in this context are formal terms for actions within a covenant or treaty relationship rather than emotional feelings, and *help* is a typical Chronicles expression for formal support." (Selman) c. **Nevertheless good things are found in you:** God did not want Jehoshaphat to be crushed by the rebuke through the words of Jehu, so He included a word of encouragement.

· **That you have removed the wooden**

**images from the land:** God knew that

Jehoshaphat did not approve of *all* evil, so He encouraged the king in the places where he did hate evil and refuse compromise.

· **And have prepared your heart to seek**

**God:** Not only did Jehoshaphat seek God, but he also **prepared his heart** to do so.

This demonstrated the *high priority*

Jehoshaphat placed on seeking God.

i. "And this work of preparing or directing his heart is here ascribed to Jehoshaphat, as

elsewhere it is attributed to God, Pro. 16:1; Phi. 2:13, because it is man's action, but

performed by God's grace, preventing,

enabling, and inclining him to do it." (Poole) B. Jehoshaphat's response.

1. (4) Jehoshaphat furthers godliness in the kingdom of Judah.

So Jehoshaphat dwelt at Jerusalem; and he went out again among the people from Beersheba to the mountains of Ephraim, and brought them back to the LORD God of their fathers.

a. **So Jehoshaphat dwelt at Jerusalem:** This means that he restricted his adventures abroad.

He no longer went to the northern kingdom of Israel and was content to stay where he should.

**b. And brought them back to the LORD**

**God of their fathers:** The wording implies that Jehoshaphat did this personally (**he went out again**). This was wonderful personal work in the cause of godliness on behalf of the king of Judah.

i. "These itinerant campaigns have no real equivalent in the Old Testament, and the prophets, even though they traveled about, were not involved in systematic teaching of the word of God. The nearest parallel is in the New Testament, in Jesus' own itinerant ministry." (Selman)

**2. (5-11) The judicial reforms of Jehoshaphat.**

Then he set judges in the land throughout all the fortified cities of Judah, city by city, and said to the judges, "Take heed to what you are doing, for you do not judge for man but for the LORD, who *is* with you in the judgment. Now therefore, let the fear of the LORD be upon you; take care and do *it*, for *there is* no iniquity with the LORD

our God, no partiality, nor taking of bribes."

Moreover in Jerusalem, for the judgment of the LORD and for controversies, Jehoshaphat

appointed some of the Levites and priests, and some of the chief fathers of Israel, when they returned to Jerusalem. And he commanded them, saying, "Thus you shall act in the fear of the LORD, faithfully and with a loyal heart: Whatever case comes to you from your brethren who dwell in their cities, whether of bloodshed or offenses against law or commandment, against statutes or ordinances, you shall warn them, lest they trespass against the LORD and wrath come upon you and your brethren. Do this, and you will not be guilty. And take notice: Amariah the chief priest *is* over you in all matters of the LORD; and Zebadiah the son of Ishmael, the ruler of the house of Judah, for all the king's

matters; also the Levites *will be* officials before you. Behave courageously, and the LORD will be with the good."

a. **Take heed to what you are doing, for you do not judge for man but for the**

**LORD, who is with you in the judgment:** This was a high and appropriate charge to the judges of Judah. We can understand the interest the Chronicler had in including this material not recorded in 1 or 2 Kings, using the example of Jehoshaphat as an encouragement to the leaders of the rebuilding community of Jerusalem and Judah after the exile.

i. "A very solemn and very necessary caution: judges should feel themselves in the place of God, and judge as those who know they shall be judged for their judgments." (Clarke)

b. **Behave courageously, and the LORD will be with the good:** The prominent theme of courageous obedience is repeated again in Chronicles. It was the job of the judges to **courageously** do what was good, and to then trust that **the LORD will be with the good**.

i. "WITHOUT good and wholesome *laws*, no nation can be prosperous; and vain are the best laws if they be not *judiciously* and *conscientiously* administered." (Clarke) © 2006 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** the prophet Jehu son of Hanani confronted him; he said to King Jehoshaphat, "Is it right to help the wicked and be an ally of those who oppose the LORD? Because you have done this the LORD is angry with you! **3**

Nevertheless you have done some good things; you removed the Asherah poles from the land and you were determined to follow the LORD."

**4** Jehoshaphat lived in Jerusalem. He went out among the people from Beer Sheba to the hill country of Ephraim and encouraged them to follow the LORD God of their ancestors.

**5** He appointed judges throughout the land and in each of

the fortified cities of Judah. **6** He told the judges, "Be careful what you do, for you are not judging for men, but for the LORD, who will be with you when you make judicial decisions. **7** Respect the LORD and make careful decisions, for the LORD our God disapproves of injustice, partiality, and bribery."

**8** In Jerusalem Jehoshaphat appointed some Levites, priests, and Israelite family leaders to judge on behalf of the LORD and to settle disputes among the residents of Jerusalem. **9** He commanded them: "Carry out your duties with respect for the LORD, with honesty, and with pure motives. **10** Whenever your countrymen who live in the cities bring a case before you (whether it involves a violent crime or other matters related to the law, commandments, rules, and regulations), warn them that they must not sin against the LORD. If you fail to do so, God will be angry with you and your colleagues; but if you obey, you will be free of guilt. **11** You will report to Amariah the chief priest in all matters pertaining to the LORD's law, and to Zebadiah son of Ishmael, the leader of the family of Judah, in all matters pertaining to the king. The Levites will serve as officials before you. Confidently carry out your duties! May the LORD be with those who do well!"

**1** Later the Moabites and Ammonites, along with some of the Meunites, attacked Jehoshaphat.

Guzik - 2 Chronicles 20:1-37

## ***2 Chronicles 20 - Jehoshaphat's Victory***

A. Jehoshaphat's prayer.

1. (1-2) Hostile enemies gather against Judah.

It happened after this *that* the people of Moab with the people of Ammon, and *others* with them besides the Ammonites, came to battle against Jehoshaphat. Then some came and told Jehoshaphat, saying, "A great multitude is coming against you from beyond the sea, from Syria; and they are in Hazazon Tamar" (which *is* En Gedi).

a. **It happened after this:** This threat to Jehoshaphat and his kingdom happened after his return to seeking God following his near death when he allied himself with king Ahab of Israel.

b. **The people of Moab with the people of Ammon, and others with them besides the Ammonites, came to battle against**

**Jehoshaphat:** This **great multitude** was a significant threat against Jehoshaphat, whose last experience on the field of battle was a narrow escape from death.

2. (3-4) The nation gathers to seek God together.

And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. So Judah gathered together to ask *help* from the LORD; and from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD.

a. **And Jehoshaphat feared:** There was certainly a sense in which Jehoshaphat feared the great multitude coming against him. Yet the sense here is that he **feared** the LORD, and was more awed at the power and majesty of God than at the destructive force of his enemies.

i. "*Jehoshaphat feared*; partly from human frailty, and partly from the remembrance of his own guilt, and the wrath of God denounced against him for it, 2Ch.

19:2." (Poole)

b. **And set himself to seek the LORD:** Jehoshaphat set the example by his own

personal devotion. He would not call upon the people of Judah to seek the LORD in a way that he did not.

i. This is a recurring theme in 2 Chronicles: the leaders who seek the LORD. We can

expect God to do great things when His people, and especially the leaders of His people, seek the Him. Others who sought the LORD in 2 Chronicles include:

· The faithful remnant of Israel (2Ch.

11:16)

- The people of Judah under king Asa (2Ch. 14:4, 15:12-13)

- Jehoshaphat in the early part of his reign (2Ch. 19:3)

- King Hezekiah (2Ch. 31:21)

- King Josiah (2Ch. 34:3)

- ii. "His attitude is summed up by the word 'seek', which occurs twice in Hebrew though it is variously translated. . . . This is a key word in Jehoshaphat's reign, where it has the basic sense of 'worship', but also means to discover God's will. It shows that Jehoshaphat has a higher trust in God than in his military resources." (Selman)

**c. And proclaimed a fast throughout all**

**Judah:** Jehoshaphat called the nation to express their humility and total dependence upon God through a public **fast** – that is, abstaining from all food for a period of time (typically a day or more) and drinking only water.

- i. In Mar. 9:28-29, Jesus explained that prayer and fasting together were a source of significant spiritual power. It isn't as if prayer and fasting make us more worthy to be blessed or do God's work; it is that prayer and fasting draw us closer to the heart of God, and they put us more in line with His power. Fasting is a powerful expression of our total dependence on Him.

**d. So Judah gathered together to ask help from the LORD:** This showed the Spirit of God at work among His people, prompting them to *respond* to the call issued from their king Jehoshaphat.

- ii. "To get this assistance, it was necessary to *seek* it; and to get such *extraordinary* help, they should seek it in an *extraordinary way*; whence he proclaimed a *universal fast*, and all the people came up to Jerusalem to seek the Lord." (Clarke)

3. (5-12) Jehoshaphat leads the assembly in prayer.

Then Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD, before the new court, and said: "O LORD God of our fathers, *are* You not God in heaven, and do You *not* rule over all the kingdoms of the nations, and in Your hand *is there not* power and might, so that no one is able to withstand You? *Are* You not our God, *who* drove out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel, and gave it to the descendants of Abraham Your friend forever?

And they dwell in it, and have built You a sanctuary in it for Your name, saying, 'If disaster comes upon us; sword, judgment, pestilence, or famine; we will stand before this temple and in Your presence (for Your name *is* in this temple), and cry out to You in our affliction, and You will hear and save.' And now, here are the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir; whom You would not let Israel invade when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them and did not destroy them; here they are, rewarding us by coming to throw us out of Your possession which You have given us to inherit. O our God, will You not judge them? For we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes *are* upon You."

**a. Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of**

**Judah and Jerusalem:** This large assembly representing the gathered kingdom needed a leader, and the godly Jehoshaphat was the logical one to unite the assembly together in prayer.

i. Adam Clarke called this "One of the most sensible, pious, correct, and as to its composition one of the most elegant prayers ever offered under the Old Testament dispensation."

ii. "The late renowned Gustavus, king of Sweden, would pray a shipboard, ashore, in

the field, in the midst of the battle; as if prayer alone were the surest piece of his whole armour." (Trapp)

**b. Are You not God in heaven, and do You not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations:** Jehoshaphat began his great prayer by recognizing the power of Yahweh over **heaven** and all **kingdoms of the nations**.

Other peoples believed in *localized* deities – as if the Moabites had their god, the Philistines their god, the Ammonites their god, and so on.

Jehoshaphat recognized that the God of Israel was in fact the God of all **kingdoms**, of all **nations**, of all the earth and indeed of **heaven** itself.

**c. Are You not our God, who drove out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel:** Jehoshaphat also prayed recognizing God's great works in the past on behalf of His people. The logic is clear: If God had done great things for His people in the past, He can be prevailed upon to do great things for His people at their moment of great need.

**d. We will stand in this temple and in Your presence:** Jehoshaphat stood on the ground of previous prayer and prior answers to prayer.

This remembers the prayer Solomon prayed at the dedication of the temple, and calls upon God to answer not only Jehoshaphat's prayer, but Solomon's also (2Ch. 6:20-25).

**e. Here are the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir; whom You would not let Israel invade when they came out of the land of Egypt:** Jehoshaphat prayed with both knowledge and understanding of God's word.

He remembered that God did not allow Israel to invade these peoples when they came from

Egypt to the Promised Land (Deu. 2:8-9 and 2:19). Since God did not allow Israel to destroy those peoples then, it would be unjust if He allowed them to

destroy Judah now. He implicitly prayed that God would not allow His people to suffer for their prior obedience.

i. "I like to plunge my hand into the promises, and then I find myself able to grasp with a grip of determination the mighty faithfulness of God. An omnipotent plea with God is: 'Do as thou hast said.'" (Spurgeon)

f. **For we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are upon You:** Here Jehoshaphat – a king standing before his people – openly confessed that he did not have the answer. Their only answer was to trust in God, that His power and goodness would protect Judah when nothing else could.

i. "The final phrase, *We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon you*, is one of the most touching expressions of trust in God to be found anywhere in the Bible." (Selman)

ii. "They said, 'Our eyes are upon thee.'

What did they mean by that? They meant, 'Lord, if help does come, it must come from thee. We are looking to thee for it. It cannot come from anywhere else, so we look to thee. But we believe it will come, men will not look for that which they know will not come. We feel sure it will come, but we do not know how, so we are looking; we do not know when, but we are looking. We do not know what thou wouldest have us to do, but as the servant looks to her mistress, so are we looking to thee, Lord. Lord, we are looking.'" (Spurgeon)

B. God answers Jehoshaphat's prayer.

1. (13-15) The promise is given through a prophet.

Now all Judah, with their little ones, their wives, and their children, stood before the LORD. Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, the son of

Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, in the midst of the assembly. And he said, "Listen, all you of Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem, and you, King Jehoshaphat! Thus says the LORD to you: 'Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle *is* not yours, but God's.'"

a. **Now all Judah, with their little ones, their wives, and their children, stood before the LORD:** The sense is that after Jehoshaphat's great prayer, the people stood silently **before the LORD**, waiting upon Him for some sense of direction or encouragement.

i. "You could have heard the sound even of the wind among the trees at the time, for

they were as hushed and as quiet as you were just now. Oh, when you know the Lord means to deliver you, bow your head and just give him the quiet, deep, solemn worship of your spirit." (Spurgeon)

b. **Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah . . . in the midst of the assembly:** Out of this huge group gathered together, the **Spirit of the LORD** came upon one man to speak to the entire **assembly**. This was a spontaneous word of prophecy that came as God's people waited before Him and sought Him.

c. **Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God's:** The threat was real – there really was a **great multitude** dedicated to destroying Judah. Yet the command was to **not be afraid nor dismayed**, because **the battle** was God's battle. He would fight on behalf of Judah against this **great multitude**.

2. (16-17) The command to stand and believe.

"Tomorrow go down against them. They will surely come up by the Ascent of Ziz, and you will find them at the end of the brook before the Wilderness of Jeruel. You will not *need* to

fight in this *battle*. Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the LORD, who is with you, O Judah and Jerusalem!' Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, for the LORD *is* with you."

a. **Tomorrow go down against them:** This was an important command, because one might think that because of the promise of 2Ch.

20:15, Judah would not even have to show up at the battle and perhaps God wanted them to stay in Jerusalem and pray. Yet God wanted them to go out to battle against the enemy and He would use their participation in the battle.

b. **They will surely come up by the Ascent of Ziz:** God knew the plans of the attacking armies precisely and He relayed this information to the king and people of Judah.

c. **You will not need to fight in this battle.**

**Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the LORD:** Judah did not **need to fight in this battle**, yet it did not mean there was *nothing* for them to do. It was a significant step of faith to **position yourselves**, to **stand still**, and to believe that you would **see the salvation of the LORD** in the face of a large attacking army.

d. **Tomorrow go out against them:** There were any number of ways that God *could* have defeated these armies assembled against Judah, but He appointed a way that demanded the participation of faith on behalf of Judah. They had to work on a faith-partnership with God.

3. (18-19) The response of worship and praise.

And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with *his* face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem bowed before the LORD, worshiping the LORD. Then the Levites of the children of the Kohathites and of the children of the Korahites stood up to praise the LORD God of Israel with voices loud and high.

a. **Bowed before the LORD, worshiping**

**the LORD:** Both king and people knew that the prophetic word through Jahaziel was true from God. Receiving it as a word from God, they worshipped the LORD who promised to save His people against this terrible threat. It was a logical response.

i. "They worshipped, but why did they do it?

They were not delivered. No, but they were sure they were going to be delivered. Their enemies were not dead. No, they were all alive, but they were sure they would be dead, so they had worship, and their devotion rose from trustful and grateful hearts." (Spurgeon)

**b. Then the Levites of the children of the Kohathites and of the children of the Korahites stood up to praise the LORD**

**God of Israel with voices loud and high:** First they worshipped with the posture of their bodies and hearts; then with song led by the chorus of the Levitical worship leaders.

4. (20-21) The battle is led by singing worshippers.

So they rose early in the morning and went out into the Wilderness of Tekoa; and as they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Hear me, O

Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem: Believe in the LORD your God, and you shall be

established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper."

And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who should sing to the LORD, and who should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army and were saying: "Praise the LORD, For His mercy *endures* forever."

a. **So they rose early in the morning and went:** This showed that they really did believe the prophecy from Jahaziel. It was one thing to profess faith among an excited assembly; it was another thing to actually walk out to meet the enemy armies.

b. **Believe in the LORD your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper:** With this exhortation Jehoshaphat considered believing the **prophets** of God to be equal to believing **the LORD your God** Himself. This remains true; to believe God's Word is to believe God Himself.

c. **And when he had consulted with the people:** Jehoshaphat was wise and good enough to know that since this crisis put **the people** at risk, then **the people** should be **consulted** regarding some of the details, including **those who should sing to the LORD**.

i. We should not think that at this moment the monarchy of Israel became a democracy. Instead, it fulfilled what it should have always been: a monarchy that was in touch with and responsive to the people and their needs and opinions.

d. **Who should praise the beauty of holiness:** God's holiness – His "set-apart-ness" – has a wonderful and distinct **beauty** about it.

It is *beautiful* that God is God and not man; that He is more than the greatest man or a super-man. His holy love, grace, justice, and majesty are *beautiful*.

e. **As they went out before the army:** The singers and worshippers *led* the army into this battle. It was clear that Judah expected a battle, because they brought the **army**. Yet it was also clear that they expected a supernatural battle because they let the singers and worshippers go **before the army**.

i. These worshippers obviously took a dangerous step of faith. If the unthinkable happened and God did not intervene they would be the first ones slaughtered by a merciless enemy. No wonder king Jehoshaphat **consulted with the people** about who these singers and worshippers

should be.

f. **And were saying: "Praise the LORD, for His mercy endures forever"** : This was the refrain of their song. They did not rest on their own merits or even the merits of Abraham, Moses, or David. They trusted and rested on the enduring **mercy** of God.

5. (22-30) Victory over the enemy and the plundering of the enemy.

Now when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushes against the people of

Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated. For the people of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir to utterly kill and destroy *them*. And when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, they helped to destroy one another. So when Judah came to a place overlooking the wilderness, they looked toward the multitude; and there *were* their dead bodies, fallen on the earth. No one had escaped. When Jehoshaphat and his people came to take away their spoil, they found among them an abundance of valuables on the dead bodies, and precious jewelry, which they stripped off for themselves, more than they could carry away; and they were three days gathering the spoil because there was so much. And on the fourth day they assembled in the Valley of Berachah, for there they blessed the LORD; therefore the name of that place was called The Valley of Berachah until this day. Then they returned, every man of Judah and Jerusalem, with Jehoshaphat in front of them, to go back to Jerusalem with joy, for the LORD had made them rejoice over their enemies. So they came to Jerusalem, with

stringed instruments and harps and trumpets, to the house of the LORD. And the fear of God was on all the kingdoms of *those* countries when they heard that the LORD had fought against the enemies of Israel. Then the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet, for his God gave him rest all around.

a. **Now when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushes against the people . . . and they were defeated:**

Just as God promised, the battle belonged to Him and He won the victory on behalf of Judah.

We might say that it was not their **praise** that won the battle, rather it was their faith; yet their **praise** was sure *evidence* of their faith.

When one really believes the words and promises of God, they cannot but help to **praise** Him.

i. "The form of the word for *ambushes* is slightly unusual and really means

'ambushers', and since it is said that God sent them, some have thought that they must be supernatural agents." (Selman)

b. **For the people of Ammon and Moab**

**stood up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir to utterly kill and destroy them:** This describes *how* God **set ambushes** against the enemies of Judah. He prompted them to fight amongst themselves so that they defeated one another, and all Judah had to do was to collect the spoil.

i. "Some understand this ambushment of the holy angels, sent suddenly in upon them to slay them; whereupon they mistaking the matter, and supposing it had been their own companions, flew upon them, and so sheathed their swords in one another's bowels." (Trapp)

c. **So when Judah came to a place overlooking the wilderness, they looked toward the multitude; and there *were***

**their dead bodies:** It seems that the army of Judah, led by the singing worshippers, never actually engaged the enemy armies. Perhaps God spared them that particular test of faith

and by the time they had actually met the enemy armies, they were already **dead** and **no one had escaped**.

d. **On the fourth day they assembled in the Valley of Berachah, for there they blessed the LORD:** They had assembled together to cry out to God for His deliverance; it was appropriate that they also assemble together to thank God and to bless His name, **for the LORD had made them rejoice over their enemies**.

e. **And the fear of God was on all the kingdoms of those countries when they heard that the LORD had fought against the enemies of Israel:**

The victory itself was a warning against the neighboring nations. This gave King Jehoshaphat and his kingdom **rest all around**.

i. We notice that this did not become a *pattern* for warfare in Judah or an invitation to conquest, led by the "invincible army of praise." This was in direct response to a specific word from God; to disobey would have been sin, but it would have also been sin to make it a standing pattern for all future warfare in Judah.

ii. The *principle* of God fighting on behalf of His people and the glory of trusting praise before the battle remained; *how* God wanted His people to participate in the battle would differ from circumstance to circumstance according to the leading of the Holy Spirit in their situation.

iii. Most importantly, we can praise God that Jesus Christ has fought the battle for our

salvation and to rescue us from the judgment of God that we so rightly deserved. This makes us *more than*

*conquerors* in Jesus Christ, because He fights the battle and defeats our foe, and we share in the spoil (Rom. 8:37).

6. (31-37) The close of Jehoshaphat's reign.

So Jehoshaphat was king over Judah. *He was* thirty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned twenty-five

years in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* Azubah the daughter of Shilhi. And he walked in the way of his father Asa, and did not turn aside from it, doing *what was* right in the sight of the LORD. Nevertheless the high places were not taken away, for as yet the people had not directed their hearts to the God of their fathers. Now the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, first and last, indeed they *are* written in the book of Jehu the son of Hanani, which *is* mentioned in the book of the kings of Israel. After this Jehoshaphat king of Judah allied himself with Ahaziah king of Israel, who acted very wickedly. And he allied himself with him to make ships to go to Tarshish, and they made the ships in Ezion Geber. But Eliezer the son of Dodavah of Mareshah prophesied against Jehoshaphat, saying, "Because you have allied yourself with Ahaziah, the LORD has destroyed your works." Then the ships were wrecked, so that they were not able to go to Tarshish.

a. **He walked in the way of his father Asa:** Asa was a good king and Jehoshaphat his son followed in his footsteps and did **what was right in the sight of the LORD**.

b. **Nevertheless the high places were not taken away:** Jehoshaphat did not do *everything* he should have as a king. Yet the Chronicler seems to tell us that this was largely because **the people had not directed their hearts to the God of their fathers**.

Jehoshaphat was a reformer, but the people would not be thoroughly reformed.

i. "The fault was not in Jehoshaphat, but in the people, who, thought they did worship the true God, yet would not be confined to the temple, but for their own convenience, or from their affection to their ancient customs, chose to worship him in the high places." (Poole)

c. **And he allied himself with him to make ships to go to Tarshish:** 1Ki. 22:48-49 tells us that this initial

partnership with **Ahaziah king of Israel** ended in disaster, when *the ships were wrecked at Ezion Geber*. It also tells us that after the rebuke from **Eliezer the son of Dodavah**, king Jehoshaphat refused another offer of alliance with Ahaziah. He had learned his lesson and did not add error upon error.

i. "The phrase 'trading ships' interprets a more literal rendering of the Hebrew, i.e.,

'ships that could go to Tarshish.' The

thought is that these vessels belonged to the class of ships that went to Tarshish; their actual destination was Ophir (cf. on 2Ch.

8:18; 1Ki. 22:48)." (Payne)

d. **The LORD has destroyed your works:** This might seem cruel of God, but it was actually mercy. It prevented Jehoshaphat from another ungodly alliance, and yielding to this temptation had hurt him before.

© 2006 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** Messengers arrived and reported to Jehoshaphat, "A huge army is attacking you from the other side of the Dead Sea, from the direction of Edom. Look, they are in Hazezon Tamar (that is, En Gedi)." **3** Jehoshaphat was afraid, so he decided to seek the LORD's advice. He decreed that all Judah should observe a fast. **4** The people of Judah assembled to ask for the LORD's help; they came from all the cities of Judah to ask for the LORD's help. **5**

Jehoshaphat stood before the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem at the LORD's temple, in front of the new courtyard. **6** He prayed: "O LORD God of our ancestors, you are the God who lives in heaven and rules over all the kingdoms of the nations. You possess strength and power; no one can stand against you. **7** Our God, you drove out the inhabitants of this land before your people Israel and gave it as a permanent possession to the descendants of your friend Abraham. **8** They settled down in it and built in it a temple

to honor you, saying, **9** 'If disaster comes on us in the form of military attack, judgment, plague, or famine, we will stand in front of this temple before you, for you are present in this temple. We will cry out to you for help in our distress, so that you will hear and deliver us.' **10**

Now the Ammonites, Moabites, and men from Mount Seir are coming! When Israel came from the land of Egypt, you did not allow them to invade these lands. They bypassed them and did not destroy them. **11** Look how they are repaying us! They come to drive us out of our allotted land which you assigned to us! **12** Our God, will you not judge them? For we are powerless against this huge army that attacks us! We don't know what we should do; we look to you for help."

**13** All the men of Judah were standing before the LORD, along with their infants, wives, and children. **14** Then in the midst of the assembly, the LORD's Spirit came upon Jachaziel son of Zechariah, son of Benaiah, son of Jeiel, son of Mattaniah, a Levite and descendant of Asaph. **15** He said: "Pay attention, all you people of Judah, residents of Jerusalem, and King Jehoshaphat! This is what the LORD says to you: 'Don't be afraid and don't panic because of this huge army! For the battle is not yours, but God's. **16**

Tomorrow march down against them as they come up the Ascent of Ziz. You will find them at the end of the ravine in front of the Desert of Jeruel. **17** You will not fight in this battle. Take your positions, stand, and watch the LORD deliver you, O Judah and Jerusalem. Don't be afraid and don't panic! Tomorrow march out toward them; the LORD is with you!"

**18** Jehoshaphat bowed down with his face toward the ground, and all the people of Judah and the residents of Jerusalem fell down before the LORD and worshiped him.

**19** Then some Levites, from the Kohathites and Korahites, got up and loudly praised the LORD God of Israel.

**20** Early the next morning they marched out to the Desert of Tekoa. When they were ready to march, Jehoshaphat stood

up and said: "Listen to me, you people of Judah and residents of Jerusalem! Trust in the LORD your God and you will be safe! Trust in the message of his prophets and you will win." **21** He met with the people and appointed musicians to play before the LORD and praise his majestic splendor. As they marched ahead of the warriors they said: "Give thanks to the LORD, for his loyal love endures."

**22** When they began to shout and praise, the LORD suddenly attacked the Ammonites, Moabites, and men from Mount Seir who were invading Judah, and they were defeated. **23** The Ammonites and Moabites attacked the men from Mount Seir and annihilated them. When they had finished off the men of Seir, they attacked and destroyed one another. **24** When the men of Judah arrived at the observation post overlooking the desert and looked at the huge army, they saw dead bodies on the ground; there were no survivors! **25** Jehoshaphat and his men went to gather the plunder; they found a huge amount of supplies, clothing and valuable items. They carried away everything they could. There was so much plunder, it took them three days to haul it off.

**26** On the fourth day they assembled in the Valley of Berachah, where they praised the LORD. So that place is called the Valley of Berachah to this very day. **27** Then all the men of Judah and Jerusalem returned joyfully to Jerusalem with Jehoshaphat leading them; the LORD had given them reason to rejoice over their enemies. **28** They entered Jerusalem to the sound of stringed instruments and trumpets and proceeded to the temple of the LORD.

**29** All the kingdoms of the surrounding lands were afraid of God when they heard how the LORD had fought against Israel's enemies. **30** Jehoshaphat's kingdom enjoyed peace; his God made him secure on every side.

**31** Jehoshaphat reigned over Judah. He was thirty-five years old when he became king and he reigned for twenty-five

years in Jerusalem. His mother was Azubah, the daughter of Shilhi. **32** He followed in his father Asa's footsteps and was careful to do what the LORD approved.

**33** However, the high places were not eliminated; the people were still not devoted to the God of their ancestors.

**34** The rest of the events of Jehoshaphat's reign, from start to finish, are recorded in the Annals of Jehu son of Hanani which are included in Scroll of the Kings of Israel.

**35** Later King Jehoshaphat of Judah made an alliance with King Ahaziah of Israel, who did evil. **36** They agreed to make large seagoing merchant ships; they built the ships in Ezion Geber. **37** Eliezer son of Dodavahu from Mareshah prophesied against Jehoshaphat, "Because you made an alliance with Ahaziah, the LORD will shatter what you have made." The ships were wrecked and unable to go to sea.

**1** Jehoshaphat passed away and was buried with his ancestors in the City of David. His son Jehoram replaced him as king.

Guzik - 2 Chronicles 21:1-20

## ***2 Chronicles 21 - Jehoram's Evil Reign***

A. The sins of Jehoram.

1. (1-5) The murder of his brothers.

And Jehoshaphat rested with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the City of David. Then Jehoram his son reigned in his place. He had brothers, the sons of Jehoshaphat: Azariah, Jehiel, Zechariah, Azaryahu, Michael, and Shephatiah; all these *were* the sons of Jehoshaphat king of Israel. Their father gave them great gifts of silver and gold and precious things, with fortified cities in Judah; but he gave the kingdom to Jehoram, because he *was* the firstborn. Now when Jehoram was established over the kingdom of his father, he strengthened himself and killed all his brothers with the sword, and also *others* of the princes of Israel. Jehoram *was* thirty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem.

a. **Then Jehoram his son reigned in his**

**place:** The father of **Jehoram** was the godly king **Jehoshaphat**. Yet one of the worst things Jehoshaphat ever did was arrange the marriage of his son **Jehoram** to Athaliah, the daughter of the evil king Ahab and his wife Jezebel (2Ki.

8:16-18; 8:26).

**b. Their father gave them great gifts . . .**

**with fortified cities:** Jehoshaphat followed the same wise policy with his sons that Rehoboam had previously followed (2Ch. 11:18-23) – to scatter them throughout the kingdom and away from the capital so they would not be a concentrated threat to his one son to succeed him, Jehoram.

i. " *Jehoshaphat king of Israel*; so he is called, either, 1. Because he was so by right.

Or, 2. Because he was king not only of Judah and Benjamin, but of a great number of Israelites, who had come into and settled themselves in his kingdom . . . Or, 3.

Because all his subjects were Israelites; and therefore he was *king of Israel*, though not *of all Israel*. . . . Some say *Israel*

was foisted into some copies by the transcriber instead of Judah, as it was first written." (Poole) c. **He strengthened himself and killed all his brothers with the sword,**

**and also other princes of Israel:** Despite

Jehoshaphat's wise policy of scattering his sons, Jehoram made it a point to murder all his

brothers so they would not be any kind of a threat against his reign.

i. "Jehoram's response to God's goodness, however, was to put not only *all his brothers to the sword*, but some of his leading 'officials' as well. 'Made himself strong'

therefore, clearly means the violent removal of all other possible claimants to the throne."

(Selman)

ii. The wickedness of Jehoram was not a surprise, considering how much he allowed

himself to be influenced by the house of Ahab. "Josephus expands on this, indicating that he committed the murders at the prompting of Athaliah." (Dilday)

iii. Perhaps some people thought that the marriage between the royal families of the Kingdom of Judah and the Kingdom of Israel would lift up the Kingdom of Israel spiritually. It didn't work that way. Instead, it brought the Kingdom of Judah *down* spiritually.

2. (6-7) Why God showed mercy to Jehoram.

And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, just as the house of Ahab had done, for he had the daughter of Ahab as a wife; and he did evil in the sight of the LORD. Yet the LORD would not destroy the house of David, because of the covenant that He had made with David, and since He had promised to give a lamp to him and to his sons forever.

**a. He walked in the way of the kings of**

**Israel:** This was not a compliment. While the southern Kingdom of Judah had a mixture of godly and wicked kings, the northern Kingdom of Israel had nothing but evil, God-rejecting kings.

i. "This was *Athaliah*, daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, who was famous for her impieties and cruelty, as was her most profligate

mother. It is likely that she was the principle cause of Jehoram's cruelty and profaneness." (Clarke)

ii. His father Jehoshaphat was a godly man who had a bad and sinful habit of making compromising associations. The worst fruit of this sinful tendency was not evident until after Jehoshaphat's death.

**b. Yet the LORD would not destroy the house of David, because of the covenant**

**that He had made with David:** The

implication is that Jehoram's evil was great enough to justify such judgment, but God

withheld it out of faithfulness to his ancestor David.

i. "The *lamp* was more than a symbol of life and of testimony, it reminded the hearer of the covenant (Psa. 132:17, *c.f.* 2Ch.

21:7)." (Wiseman)

ii. When God first made this promise to

David it was not formally called a covenant (1 Chronicles 17, 2 Samuel 7). However, it

was divinely called a covenant afterwards

(2Sa. 23:5; Psa. 89:3, 89:34; Psa. 132:11-12). (Payne)

B. The consequences of his sin

1. (8-11) Jehoram's sinful compromise and the revolt of Edom and Libnah.

In his days the Edomites revolted against Judah's authority, and made a king over themselves. So Jehoram went out with his officers, and all his chariots with him. And he rose by night and attacked the Edomites who had surrounded him and the captains of the chariots. Thus Edom has been in revolt against Judah's authority to this day. At that time Libnah revolted against his rule, because he had forsaken the LORD God of his fathers. Moreover he made high places in the mountains of Judah, and caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to commit harlotry, and led Judah astray.

**a. In his days the Edomites revolted**

**against Judah's authority:** For some time, Edom was essentially a client kingdom to Judah and owed them tribute (taxes). Under the reign of Jehoram, the leaders of Edom sensed weakness in Judah and their opportunity to free themselves.

i. "Nothing else is known of trouble in Libnah, a town of uncertain location on

Judah's western border not far from

Lachish." (Selman)

ii. "As long as the kings of Judah remained true to their allegiance to God, they were able to keep in subjection the surrounding nations; but just so soon as they revolted from God these people revolted from there.

It was as though power descended into them from the source of all power; and when that link between themselves and God was broken, that between themselves and

their subordinates was broken also." (Meyer) iii. This applies to our *passions*; when we are properly submitted to God, our passions are properly submitted to us. When we come out from submission to God, we often find

our passions flare up in seemingly overwhelming strength. It also applies to the proper exercise of authority in any sphere –

home, government, church, society –those who are submitted to God can be trusted to be submitted unto.

**b. He rose by night and attacked the Edomites who had surrounded him:** We

aren't told a specific outcome of this battle; perhaps it was inconclusive. Yet because of the Edom's continued revolt against Judah, it was evident that Judah did not exert itself over Edom against and they remained somewhat independent.

**c. Thus Edom has been in revolt against**

**Judah's authority:** This is evidence of the weakness of the kingdom of Jehoram. He

thought that the marriage alliance with Ahab and the Kingdom of Israel would make Judah

stronger, but this act of disobedience only made them weaker – **because he had forsake the LORD God of his fathers.**

d. **Moreover he made high places:** It was the policy of both his father Jehoshaphat (2Ch.

17:6) and his grandfather Asa (2Ch. 14:1-5) to work against these **high places**. Jehoram *promoted* them instead.

i. "He is the first Judean king who actually constructed *high places*, among which is probably to be counted a Baal temple in Jerusalem ( *cf.* 2Ch. 23:17)." (Selman) e. **And**

**caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to commit harlotry:** Their idolatry was likened to **harlotry** for two reasons. First, the worship of these pagan sex/fertility gods and goddesses often involved immorality with a pagan priestess or priest. Second, since Israel was obligated to be faithful to God as a wife is obligated to be faithful to her husband, their idolatry was like **harlotry** in a spiritual sense.

2. (12-15) Elijah's letter of rebuke to Jehoram.

And a letter came to him from Elijah the prophet, saying, Thus says the LORD God of your father David: Because you have not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat your father, or in the ways of Asa king of Judah, but have walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and have made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to play the harlot like the harlotry of the house of Ahab, and also have killed your brothers, those of your father's household, *who were* better than yourself, behold, the LORD will strike your people with a serious affliction; your children, your wives, and all your possessions; and you *will become* very sick with a disease of your intestines, until your intestines come out by reason of the sickness, day by day.

a. **And a letter came to him from Elijah the prophet:**

Elijah's main ministry was to the kings of the northern tribes, the kingdom of Israel. Yet on occasion God also used him to speak to kings of Judah, this time through **a letter**.

i. "How could this be, when Elijah was rapt up to heaven in Jehoshaphat's time, 2 Kings 2; 3:11. *Answer.* Either, 1. This was Elisha, or some other prophet called Elijah, because he

acted in the spirit and the power of Elijah, for which John the Baptist is also

called. Or rather, 2. This was really written by Elijah, who by the Spirit did clearly

foresee and foretell the reign and acts of Jehoram." (Poole)

ii. "Elijah may, however, have been gone by the time of the delivery of his letter, so that its sentence of doom could have had the force of a voice coming from the dead." (Payne)

**b. But have walked in the way of the kings of Israel:**

This was God's main complaint against Jehoram. He had refused to follow the pattern of his father and grandfather, and instead decided to follow the example of his father-in-law Ahab.

**c. Who were better than yourself:** God considered the brothers of Jehoram to be more worthy successors to the throne of Judah than Jehoram himself.

**d. You will become very sick with a**

**disease of your intestines:** God promised this painful ailment would come to Jehoram as a punishment for his sins.

3. (16-17) Further troubles of the reign of Jehoram.

Moreover the LORD stirred up against Jehoram the spirit of the Philistines and the Arabians who *were* near the Ethiopians. And they came up into Judah and invaded it, and carried away all the possessions that were found in the king's house, and also his sons and his wives, so that there was not a son left to him except Jehoahaz, the youngest of his sons.

**a. Moreover the LORD stirred up against**

**Jehoram the spirit of the Philistines and the Arabians:** This was another judgment against Jehoram – to bring enemies against him to trouble his reign.

**b. Also his sons and his wives, so that there was not a son left to him except**

**Jehoahaz, the youngest of his sons:** This was a fitting judgment against Jehoram. In trying to protect his own throne he murdered all his brothers, and eventually found that all **his sons** were taken except one.

i. "In the outworkings of God's justice, the man who began by massacring his own brothers ended by suffering the loss of his sons and wives." (Payne)

4. (18-20) Jehoram's gruesome end.

After all this the LORD struck him in his intestines with an incurable disease. Then it happened in the course of time, after the end of two years, that his intestines came out because of his sickness; so he died in severe pain. And his people made no burning for him, like the burning for his fathers. He was thirty-two years old when he became king. He reigned in Jerusalem eight years and, to no one's sorrow, departed.

However they buried him in the City of David, but not in the tombs of the kings.

a. **After all this the LORD struck him in his intestines with an incurable disease:** Again, this was a fitting judgment. There was a sense in which Jehoram was rotten spiritually from within; here, God simply caused the physical condition of his body simply corresponded to the spiritual condition of his soul – **so he died in severe pain.**

i. "The *Targum* seems to intimate that he had a constipation and inflammation in his bowels; and that at last his bowels gushed out." (Clarke)

ii. Apparently he suffered for **two years**.

"This was a long while to lie under so intolerable a disease; and yet all this was but a typical hell, a foretaste of eternal torments, unless he repented." (Trapp) iii. "Translation problems have increased the difficulty, and the end may have come suddenly, 'in two days' ( *cf.* Keil, Dillard), rather than at the end of the *second year*." (Selman)

b. **And, to no one's sorrow, departed:** This compromising and sinful king was not mourned when he died. "He is one of the most unlovely of all the kings of Judah. 'Exalted by Jehovah,' he was for his wickedness thrust down to a dishonoured grave." (Knapp)

i. "As he lived wickedly, so he died wishedly." (Trapp)

ii. "He was hated while he lived, and neglected when he died; visibly cursed of God, and necessarily execrated by the people whom he had lived only to corrupt and oppress. No *annalist* is mentioned as having taken the pains to write any account of his vile life." (Clarke)

iii. "Strange indeed is the human heart. It turns to evil, and pursues it persistently; and yet it never really loves those who lead it in the way of evil. . . . Love is only inspired by goodness. Men will follow those who lead them in the ways of corruption, but such following is always inspired by evil selfishness, and never by admiration or love." (Morgan)

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**2** His brothers, Jehoshaphat's sons, were Azariah, Jechiel, Zechariah, Azariahu, Michael, and Shephatiah. All of these were sons of King Jehoshaphat of Israel. **3** Their father gave them many presents, including silver, gold, and other precious items, along with fortified cities in Judah. But he gave the kingdom to Jehoram because he was the firstborn.

**4** Jehoram took control of his father's kingdom and became powerful. Then he killed all his brothers, as well as some of the officials of Israel. **5** Jehoram was thirty-two years old when he became king and he reigned for eight years in Jerusalem. **6** He followed in the footsteps of the kings of Israel, just as Ahab's dynasty had done, for he married

Ahab's daughter. He did evil in the sight of the LORD. **7** But the LORD was unwilling to destroy David's dynasty because of the promise he had made to give David a perpetual dynasty.

**8** During Jehoram's reign Edom freed themselves from Judah's control and set up their own king. **9** Jehoram crossed over to Zair with his officers and all his chariots.

The Edomites, who had surrounded him, attacked at night and defeated him and his chariot officers. **10** So Edom has remained free from Judah's control to this very day. At that same time Libnah also rebelled and freed themselves from Judah's control because Jehoram rejected the LORD

God of his ancestors. **11** He also built high places on the hills of Judah; he encouraged the residents of Jerusalem to be unfaithful to the LORD and led Judah away from the LORD.

**12** Jehoram received this letter from Elijah the prophet:

"This is what the LORD God of your ancestor David says:

'You have not followed in the footsteps of your father Jehoshaphat and of King Asa of Judah, **13** but have instead followed in the footsteps of the kings of Israel. You encouraged the people of Judah and the residents of Jerusalem to be unfaithful to the LORD, just as the family of Ahab does in Israel. You also killed your brothers, members of your father's family, who were better than you. **14** So look, the LORD is about to severely afflict your people, your sons, your wives, and all you own. **15** And you will get a serious, chronic intestinal disease which will cause your intestines to come out.'

**16** The LORD stirred up against Jehoram the Philistines and the Arabs who lived beside the Cushites. **17** They attacked Judah and swept through it. They carried off everything they found in the royal palace, including his sons and wives. None of his sons was left, except for his youngest, Ahaziah.

**18** After all this happened, the LORD

afflicted him with an incurable intestinal disease. **19** After about two years his intestines came out because of the disease, so that he died a very painful death. His people did not make a bonfire to honor him, as they had done for his ancestors.

**20** Jehoram was thirty-two years old when he became king and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem. No one regretted his death; he was buried in the City of David, but not in the royal tombs.

**1** The residents of Jerusalem made his youngest son Ahaziah king in his place, for the raiding party that invaded the city with the Arabs had killed all the older sons. So Ahaziah son of Jehoram became king of Judah.

Guzik - 2 Chronicles 22:1-12

***2 Chronicles 22 - The Evil Reigns of Ahaziah and***

# Athaliah

A. Ahaziah's rise and fall.

1. (1-4) The brief and wicked reign of Ahaziah.

Then the inhabitants of Jerusalem made Ahaziah his youngest son king in his place, for the raiders who came with the Arabians into the camp had killed all the older *sons*. So Ahaziah the son of Jehoram, king of Judah, reigned. Ahaziah *was* forty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* Athaliah the granddaughter of Omri.

He also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab, for his mother advised him to do wickedly.

Therefore he did evil in the sight of the LORD, like the house of Ahab; for they were his counselors after the death of his father, to his destruction.

a. **The inhabitants of Jerusalem made**

**Ahaziah his youngest son king in his place:** As will be demonstrated, the son of Jehoram named **Ahaziah** was an unworthy man. Yet the Chronicler explains why the **inhabitants of Jerusalem** made him king – because raiding Arabians **had killed all the older sons**.

i. " *Men that came with the Arabians*; either, 1. A cruel sort of men who came along with the Arabians, and therefore slew those

whom the Arabians had spared, and only carried into captivity. Or, 2. The Philistines, who did accompany the Arabians in this expedition, 2Ch. 21:16, who lived near the

kingdom of Judah, and therefore thought to make as sure work as they could in destroying all the branches of the royal family." (Poole)

b. **He reigned one year in Jerusalem:** The short life and reign of Jehoram (he reigned only eight years and died at 40 years of age) should have warned Ahaziah. His brief reign (**one year**) shows he was even *less* blessed than his father Jehoram.

i. "Ahaziah succeeded his father, Jehoram, in the critical year 841 B.C. He was not to survive the momentous waves of the political events that were to inundate the ancient Near East in that year. Indeed, in 841 B.C. Shalmaneser III of Assyria (859-824 B.C.) at last was able to break the

coalition of western allies with whom he had previously fought a long series of battles (853, 848, 845)." (Patterson and Austel) ii. **Forty-two years old:** This is at odds with 2Ki. 8:26 which says that Ahaziah took the throne when 22 years old. "I am satisfied the reading in 2Ch. 22:2, is a *mistake*; and that we should read . . .

*twenty-two* instead of *forty-two* year. . . . Is there a single ancient author of any kind, but particularly those who have written on

matters of *history* and *chronology*, whose works have been transmitted to us free of similar errors, owing to the negligence of transcribers?" (Clarke)

iii. "The reading found in the LXX and 2Ki.

8:26 for Ahaziah's age of 'twenty-two years'

is to be adopted, rather than the MT's 'forty-two,' which would make him older than his father (cf. 2Ch. 21:20)." (Payne)

c. **He also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab, for his mother advised him to do wickedly:** Ahaziah's mother was the wicked **Athaliah**, who was the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel of the northern kingdom of Israel and she was given in marriage to Jehoram, the king of Judah. She brought her influence to bear upon her son and made him

more of a son of Ahab and Jezebel than a son of David and his godly descendents.

i. Through her control of her son and her subsequent reign (2Ch. 22:10-12), "During both reigns, therefore, Ahab's dynasty was in effective control of Judah. The unity of Judah and Israel is eloquently symbolized by the names of their kings. No other Israelite king was called Jehoram or Ahaziah, yet both names are used of successive contemporary rulers in Judah and Israel." (Selman)

2. (5-9) Ahaziah falls in judgment along with Ahab's house by Jehu in Israel.

He also followed their advice, and went with Jehoram the son of Ahab king of Israel to war against Hazael king of Syria at Ramoth Gilead; and the Syrians wounded Joram. Then he returned to Jezreel to recover from the wounds which he had received at Ramah, when he fought against Hazael king of Syria. And Azariah the son of Jehoram, king of Judah, went down to see Jehoram the son of Ahab in Jezreel, because he was sick. His going to Joram was God's occasion for Ahaziah's downfall; for when he arrived, he went out with Jehoram against Jehu the son of Nimshi, whom the LORD had anointed to cut off the house of Ahab. And it happened, when Jehu was executing judgment on the house of Ahab, and found the princes of Judah and the sons of Ahaziah's brothers who served Ahaziah, that he killed them. Then he searched for Ahaziah; and they caught him (he was hiding in Samaria), and brought him to Jehu. When they had killed him, they buried him, "because," they said, "he is the son of Jehoshaphat, who sought the LORD with all his heart." So the house of Ahaziah had no one to assume power over the kingdom.

**a. Went with Jehoram the son of Ahab**

**king of Israel to war against Hazael king of Syria:**

Ahaziah's close association with the wicked house of Ahab developed into a war alliance with Israel against Syria. His

connection with his mother's family (she was a daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, 2Ki. 8:18) was so strong and sympathetic that he paid a visit to the injured and sick King of Israel (**Jehoram**).

**b. Then he searched for Ahaziah; and they caught him:** Jehu was one of the more interesting men of the Old Testament. God raised him up to bring judgment against the dynasty of Omri that ruled the northern kingdom of Israel (2Ki. 9:1-26). In the course of fulfilling that divine commission, he also came against **Ahaziah**, king of Judah.

i. Jehu had no direct command or commission from God to bring judgment upon the King of Judah, but he did anyway. Consciously or unconsciously, he was guided by God and he killed Ahaziah.

ii. **And the sons of Ahaziah's bothers:** "The Hebrew calls them 'sons of the brothers of Ahaziah', but, since his actual brothers were dead (2Ch. 21:17; 22:1) and their sons were probably no more than children, they are best regarded as 'kinsmen.'" (Selman)

**c. When they had killed him:** Ahaziah was happy to associate himself with the northern Kingdom of Israel and their wicked kings.

Therefore he died in the same judgment that came upon the King of Israel through Jehu.

i. Ahaziah was also a blood relative of Ahab (Ahab was his grandfather), therefore making him liable under the judgment that

came upon Ahab and his descendants. "By failing to separate himself from Jehoram, he made himself liable to suffer the same punishment that God had previously announced against Ahab's house which he had chosen Hazael and Jehu to carry out." (Selman)

ii. 2Ki. 9:1-26 also records the reign of Ahaziah and his inglorious end at the hands of Jehu. The reconciliation of the details of the death of Ahaziah between 2 Chronicles 22 and 2 Kings 9 is complicated, but definitely possible. Adam Clarke – among other commentators – carefully works out the details.

iii. "The final movements of Ahaziah are difficult to trace but may perhaps be reconstructed as follows: he fled south from Jezreel so as to hide in Samaria. He was brought to Jehu, who fatally wounded him

near Ibleam (between Jezreel and Samaria);

he fled by chariot northwest to Megiddo,

where he died (2Ki. 9:27); and his body was carried by Ahaziah's servants to Jerusalem (2Ki. 9:28), where they buried him." (Payne) d. **They buried him:** When Ahaziah was killed in battle, they gave him a dignified burial – not for his own sake, but only because his ancestor Jehoshaphat was a godly man.

B. The reign of Queen Athaliah.

1. (10) The evil Queen Athaliah reigns over Judah.

Now when Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the royal heirs of the house of Judah.

a. **When Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah**

**saw that her son was dead:** She used the occasion of her son's death to take power for *herself*, and she *reigned over the land* for six years (2Ki. 11:1-3).

i. We remember that Athaliah was the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, and was given to Jehoram, King of Judah as a bride. She was a bad influence on both her husband (Jehoram of Judah) and her son (King Ahaziah of Judah).

b. **And destroyed all the royal heirs:** Athaliah was from the family of Ahab, and Jehu had completely destroyed all of

Ahab's descendants in Israel. Now, after Jehu's coup, Athaliah tried to save something for Ahab's family by trying to eliminate the house of David in Judah.

i. "However, no evil anger is sufficient to frustrate divine purpose, and against the wickedness of one woman God set the

compassion of another." (Morgan)

ii. Years before, the King of Judah –

Jehoshaphat – married his son to this

daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, hoping to

make an alliance with those wicked and

apostate leaders. "And this was the fruit of Jehoshaphat's marrying his son to a daughter of that idolatrous and wicked house of Ahab, even the extirpation of all his posterity but one." (Poole)

iii. "No character in history, sacred or secular, stands out blacker or more hideous than this daughter-in-law of the godly Jehoshaphat." (Knapp)

2. (11-12) God uses Jehoshabeath to preserve the royal line of David.

But Jehoshabeath, the daughter of the king, took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole him away from among the king's sons who were being murdered, and put him and his nurse in a

bedroom. So Jehoshabeath, the daughter of King Jehoram, the wife of Jehoiada the priest (for she was the sister of Ahaziah), hid him from Athaliah so that she did not kill him. And he was hidden with them in the house of God for six years, while Athaliah reigned over the land.

a. **But Jehoshabeath:** This little-known woman (known as *Jehosheba* in 2Ki. 11:2) had an important place in God's plan of the ages.

Through her courage and ingenuity, she

preserved the royal line of David through which the Messiah would come. Evil people like Athaliah will begin their work,

**but** God can always raise up a **Jehoshabeath**.

i. "This incident is really a tale of two women." (Selman)

ii. "Thus evil always breaks down. It is extremely clever, it calculates on all the changes, and seems to leave no unguarded

place; but with unvarying regularity it fails somewhere to cover up its tracks, or to insure its victory." (Morgan)

iii. **She was the sister of Ahaziah:** "It is not likely that Jehosheba was the daughter of *Athaliah*; she was a sister, we find, to Ahaziah the son of Athaliah, but probably by a different mother." (Clarke) b. **He was hidden with her in**

**the house of God for six years:** Though Ahaziah was a bad king who made evil alliances, he was still a descendant of David and the successor of his royal line. For the sake of David, God remembered His promise and spared this one young survivor to the massacre of Athaliah. The line of David was almost extinguished and continued only in the presence of a small boy named **Joash**, but God preserved that flickering flame.

i. "Josephus ( *Antiquities* 9.7.1) says that the *bedroom* where the child and his nurse hid was room where spare furniture and mattresses were stored." (Wiseman)

ii. Like the boy Samuel, Joash grew up in the temple. Like Samuel, he probably found little ways to help the priests, whatever could be done without attracting too much attention.

iii. "Nothing but the miraculous intervention of the divine providence could have saved the line of David at this time, and preserved the prophecy relative to the Messiah. The whole truth of that prophecy, and the

salvation of the world, appeared to be now

suspended on the brittle thread of the life of an *infant* of a year old, (see 2Ch. 24:1,) to destroy whom was the interest of the reigning power! But God can save by few as

well as by many. He had purposed, and vain

were the counter-exertions of earth and

hell." (Clarke)

iv. "There are hours in human history when it seems as though evil were almost all powerful. It entrenches itself in great

strength; it builds up great ramparts; it

inaugurates policies of the utmost craft and cleverness. It seems to be able to bind together a kingdom which is invincible. All this is false seeming. There is no finality, no security, in the apparent might of iniquity." (Morgan)

© 2006 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** Ahaziah was twenty-two years old when he became king and he reigned for one year in Jerusalem. His mother was Athaliah, the granddaughter of Omri. **3** He followed in the footsteps of Ahab's dynasty, for his mother gave him evil advice. **4** He did evil in the sight of the LORD like Ahab's dynasty because, after his father's death, they gave him advice that led to his destruction. **5** He followed their advice and joined Ahab's son King Joram of Israel in a battle against King Hazael of Syria at Ramoth Gilead in which the Syrians defeated Joram. **6** Joram returned to Jezreel to recover from the wounds he received from the Syrians in Ramah when he fought against King Hazael of Syria. Ahaziah son of King Jehoram of Judah went down to visit Joram son of Ahab in Jezreel, because he had been wounded.

**7** God brought about Ahaziah's downfall through his visit to Joram. When Ahaziah arrived, he went out with Joram to meet Jehu son of Nimshi, whom the LORD had commissioned to wipe out Ahab's family. **8** While Jehu was dishing out punishment to Ahab's family, he discovered the officials of Judah and the sons of Ahaziah's relatives who were serving Ahaziah and killed them. **9** He looked for Ahaziah, who was captured while hiding in Samaria. They brought him to Jehu and then executed him. They did give him a burial, for they reasoned, "He is the son of Jehoshaphat, who sought the LORD with his whole heart."

There was no one in Ahaziah's family strong enough to rule in his place.

**10** When Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she was determined to destroy the entire royal line of Judah. **11** So Jehoshabeath, the daughter of King Jehoram, took Ahaziah's son Joash and sneaked him away from the rest of the royal descendants who were to be executed. She hid him and his nurse in the room where the bed covers were stored. So Jehoshabeath the daughter of King Jehoram, wife of Jehoiada the priest and sister of Ahaziah, hid him from Athaliah so she could not execute him. **12** He remained in hiding in God's temple for six years, while Athaliah was ruling over the land.

**1** In the seventh year Jehoiada made a bold move. He made a pact with the officers of the units of hundreds: Azariah son of Jehoram, Ishmael son of Jehochanan, Azariah son of Obed, Maaseiah son of Adaiah, and Elishaphat son of Zikri.

Guzik - 2 Chronicles 23:1-21

***2 Chronicles 23 - Jehoiada and the Crowning of***

# Joash

A. The plan is put into practice.

1. (1-7) Jehoiada and his plan to restore Joash to the throne of Judah.

In the seventh year Jehoiada strengthened himself, *and made a* covenant with the captains of hundreds: Azariah the son of Jeroham, Ishmael the son of Jehohanan, Azariah the son of Obed, Maaseiah the son of Adaiah, and Elishaphat the son of Zichri. And they went throughout Judah and gathered the Levites from all the cities of Judah, and the chief fathers of Israel, and they came to Jerusalem. Then all the assembly made a covenant with the king in the house of God. And he said to them, "Behold, the king's son shall reign, as the LORD has said of the sons of David. This *is* what you shall do: One-third of you entering on the Sabbath, of the priests and the Levites, *shall be* keeping watch over the doors; one-third *shall be* at the king's house; and one-third at the Gate of the Foundation. All the people *shall be* in the courts of the house of the LORD. But let no one come into the house of the LORD except the priests and those of the Levites who serve. They may go in, for they *are* holy; but all the people shall keep the watch of the LORD. And the Levites shall surround the king on all sides, every man with his weapons in his hand; and whoever comes into the house, let him be put to death. You are to be with the king when he comes in and when he goes out."

**a. Jehoiada strengthened himself, and made a covenant with the captains:**

Jehoiada was a godly man who was concerned with restoring the throne of David to the line of David, and taking it away from this daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. He was also the husband of Jehoshabeath, the woman who hid

the young boy Joash and protected him from the Athaliah's massacre.

i. "The easiest thing for Jehoiada would have been to shut himself up in the temple, and leave things to take their course. The noblest thing was to come forth, and boldly confront the rampant, evil of his time." (Meyer)

ii. "The world is full of Athaliahs, and it is not befitting that the Jehoiadas should remain at their holy rites and services if there is a paramount need for action in the world's battlefield, in the strife against wrong." (Meyer)

b. **Then all the assembly made a covenant with the king in the house of God:** From the *place* where the oath was made and the *context* of the oath, we learn that the worship of the true God was not dead in Judah. These **captains** could respond to their responsibility before the LORD.

c. **Behold, the king's son shall reign:** This was a dramatic moment. For six years everyone believed there were no more surviving heirs of David's royal line and there was no legitimate ruler to displace the wicked Athaliah. The secret had to be secure, because **the king's son** would be immediately killed if his existence were revealed. The **captains** must have been shocked by the sight of this six-year old heir to the throne.

i. One reason Athaliah was able to reign for six years was that *no one knew any alternative*. Many people live under the reign of Satan because they don't really know there is a legitimate king ready to take reign in their life.

d. **This is what you shall do:** Jehoiada had a plan to depose the wicked Queen Athaliah and to replace her with the boy king. These leaders needed to follow his plan carefully, and to do it **on the Sabbath**. Jehoiada chose the

Sabbath for the day of the coup, because that was the day when the guards changed their shifts and they could assemble two groups of guards at the temple at the same time without attracting attention.

i. "It was a weighty work he went about, and therefore he took the wisest course, the fittest time; on the Sabbath, when the congregation met; and in the temple, wither Athaliah and her courtiers seldom came." (Trapp)

2. (8-11) Joash is crowned king.

So the Levites and all Judah did according to all that Jehoiada the priest commanded. And each man took his men who were to be on duty on the Sabbath, with those who were going *off duty* on the Sabbath; for Jehoiada the priest had not dismissed the divisions. And Jehoiada the priest gave to the captains of hundreds the spears and the large and small shields which *had belonged* to King David, that *were* in the temple of God.

Then he set all the people, every man with his weapon in his hand, from the right side of the temple to the left side of the temple, along by the altar and by the temple, all around the king. And they brought out the king's son, put the crown on him, *gave him* the Testimony, and made him king. Then Jehoiada and his sons anointed him, and said, "*Long live the king!*"

a. **So the Levites and all Judah did according to all that Jehoiada the priest commanded:**

This was an important plan that had to be followed carefully. Athaliah was a powerful enemy and many had a vested interest in her corrupt reign.

b. **The spears and the large and small shields which had belonged to King David, that were in the temple of God:** These men were equipped with weapons dating from the days of King David. It was fitting for these soldiers who would set the heir of David's royal line

back on the throne of Judah to use these weapons which had belonged to King David.

c. **Then they brought out the king's son:** First the **king's son** had to be *revealed*. No one could support him and he could not take his rightful throne until he was **brought out** before the people.

d. **Put the crown on him:** Next the **king's son** had to be *crowned*. This was the public and official recognition of him as king.

e. **Gave him the Testimony:** The **king's son** had to come *with the Word of God*. Joash appeared before the people holding the scrolls of God's Word.

i. Deu. 17:18 says that the king should have his own copy of the Scriptures. "This is the basis for the British custom of presenting the monarch with a copy of the Bible during the coronation service." (Wiseman) f. **And made him king:** The **king's son** had to be received. He had the royal right to impose his reign, but he instead allowed his rule to be received.

g. **Anointed him:** The **king's son** could never fulfill his office without a divine anointing.

h. **And said, "Long live the king!"** The **king's son** received praise once he was recognized as their king.

i. We can and should follow the same

pattern in our reception of Jesus Christ, the *true king's son*.

ii. "Is not the spiritual condition of too many children of God represented by the condition of the Temple, during the early years of the life of Joash? The king was within its precincts, the rightful heir of the crown and defender of the worship of Jehovah: but as a matter of fact, the crown was on the head of the usurper Athaliah, who was exercising a cruel and sanguinary tyranny. The king was

limited to a chamber, and the majority of the priests, with all the people, had not even

heard of his existence. There needs to be an anointing, an enthroning, a determination

that He shall exercise his power over the entire Temple of our Being." (Meyer)

B. Athaliah's demise.

1. (12-13) Her distress upon discovering the plot against her. Now when Athaliah heard the noise of the people running and praising the king, she came to the people *in* the temple of the LORD. When she looked, there was the king standing by his pillar at the entrance; and the leaders and the trumpeters *were* by the king. All the people of the land were rejoicing and blowing trumpets, also the singers with musical instruments, and those who led in praise. So Athaliah tore her clothes and said, "Treason! Treason!"

a. **When she looked, there was the king:** For the usurper queen mother this was a horrifying sight. For six years she ruled because she believed there were no legitimate claimants to the throne of David. Now she sees that one son of Ahaziah – Joash, *her own grandson* – escaped her murderous intent.

b. **All the people of the land were rejoicing:** They were obviously weary of the wicked reign of Athaliah.

c. **Treason! Treason!** The charge was not unfounded. This was treason against her government, but it was a well-founded and godly treason against a tyrannical, wicked ruler.

2. (14-15) She and her supporters are executed And Jehoiada the priest brought out the captains of hundreds who were set over the army, and said to them, "Take her outside under guard, and slay with the sword whoever follows her." For the priest had said, "Do not kill her in the house of the LORD." So they seized her; and she went by way of the entrance of the Horse Gate *into* the king's house, and they killed her there.

a. **Take her outside under guard, and slay with the sword whoever follows her:** This was both righteous and

prudent. It was a just sentence against this woman who had murdered so many, and prudent precautions were taken so she could not mount a resistance.

b. **Do not kill her in the house of the LORD:** As a priest, Jehoiada had a great concern for the sanctity and reputation of the temple. Yet in the place where horses entered, **they killed her there.**

i. "Her own treason against the true and abiding King of the nation was defeated.

Thus, sooner or later, and in ways equally dramatic, the moment arrives when those who plot and plan against Heaven and righteousness, find themselves looking at the evidences of the triumph of God and of goodness over all their wickedness." (Morgan)

C. The reforms of Jehoiada the priest.

1. (16-17) Jehoiada makes a covenant.

Then Jehoiada made a covenant between himself, the people, and the king, that they should be the Lord's people. And all the people went to the temple of Baal, and tore it down.

They broke in pieces its altars and images, and killed Mattan the priest of Baal before the altars.

a. **A covenant between himself, the people, and the king:** This shows that God intends that both kings and citizens have mutual obligations towards the other. Neither have absolute rights over or against the other.

i. "Along with Jehoiada's political revolution came a corresponding religious revival – that king, priest, and citizenry would together 'be the LORD's people.'" (Payne) ii. "The climax is not Joash's coronation but a covenant renewing the nation's relationship with God." (Selman)

b. **That they should be the Lord's people:** The covenant was between the LORD and the

king and the people. They re-committed themselves to honor, obey, and serve God.

c. **And all the people went to the temple of Baal, and tore it down:** In 2 Kings 10 Jehu supervised the destruction of the temple of Baal in Samaria. Here the temple of Baal in Jerusalem was destroyed, and appropriately destroyed by **the people**.

i. They didn't stop at destroying the building itself; they went on to destroy both the sacred objects dedicated to Baal and to kill **Mattan the priest of Baal**. "The execution of 'Mattan the priest of Baal' carried out the requirement of God's Word directed against those who should lead others into false religion (Deu. 13:5-10)." (Payne)

2. (18-21) Jehoiada restores the proper plans of worship and service.

Also Jehoiada appointed the oversight of the house of the LORD to the hand of the priests, the Levites, whom David had assigned in the house of the LORD, to offer the burnt offerings of the LORD, as *it is* written in the Law of Moses, with rejoicing and with singing, *as it was established* by David. And he set the gatekeepers at the gates of the house of the LORD, so that no one *who was* in any way unclean should enter. Then he took the captains of hundreds, the nobles, the governors of the people, and all the people of the land, and brought the king down from the house of the LORD; and they went through the Upper Gate to the king's house, and set the king on the throne of the kingdom. So all the people of the land rejoiced; and the city was quiet, for they had slain Athaliah with the sword.

a. **Whom David had assigned . . . as it is written in the Law of Moses:** The priest Jehoiada was careful to reinstitute these practices and customs according to *Biblical* patterns, based on what God had revealed to **David** and **Moses**.

i. **So that no one who was in any way**

**unclean should enter:** "Oh that we also had store of such porters, to keep out the unclean from holy ordinances!" (Trapp) b. **And set the king on the throne of the kingdom:** After more than six dark years, now the rightful king of Judah once again ruled over his grateful people. No wonder, **the people of the land rejoiced.**

i. "The people's *rejoicing* augmented the joy of temple worship, and sounded a note unheard since the days of Jehoshaphat (2Ch. 20:27). That the city was *quiet* was a sign of God's blessing, which often followed special acts of faith and obedience ( *cf.* 1Ch. 4:40; 22:9; 2Ch. 13:23; 14:4-5; 20:30)." (Selman)

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**2** They traveled throughout Judah and assembled the Levites from all the cities of Judah, as well as the Israelite family leaders.

They came to Jerusalem, **3** and the whole assembly made a covenant with the king in the temple of God. Jehoiada said to them, "The king's son will rule, just as the LORD promised David's descendants. **4** This is what you must do.

One third of you priests and Levites who are on duty during the Sabbath will guard the doors. **5** Another third of you will be stationed at the royal palace and still another third at the Foundation Gate. All the others will stand in the courtyards of the LORD's temple. **6** No one must enter the LORD's temple except the priests and Levites who are on duty. They may enter because they are ceremonially pure. All the others should carry out their assigned service to the LORD. **7** The Levites must surround the king. Each of you must hold his weapon in his hand. Whoever tries to enter the temple must be killed. You must accompany the king wherever he goes."

**8** The Levites and all the men of Judah did just as Jehoiada the priest ordered. Each of them took his men, those who were on duty during the Sabbath as well as those who were off duty on the Sabbath. Jehoiada the priest did not release his divisions from their duties. **9**

Jehoiada the priest gave to the officers of the units of hundreds King David's spears and shields that were kept in God's temple. **10** He placed the men at their posts, each holding his weapon in his hand. They lined up from the south side of the temple to the north side and stood near the altar and the temple, surrounding the king. **11**

Jehoiada and his sons led out the king's son and placed on him the crown and the royal insignia. They proclaimed him king and poured olive oil on his head. They declared, "Long live the king!"

**12** When Athaliah heard the royal guard shouting and praising the king, she joined the crowd at the LORD's temple. **13** Then she saw the king standing by his pillar at the entrance. The officers and trumpeters stood beside the king and all the people of the land were celebrating and blowing trumpets, and the musicians with various instruments were leading the celebration. Athaliah tore her clothes and yelled, "Treason! Treason!" **14** Jehoiada the priest sent out the officers of the units of hundreds, who were in charge of the army, and ordered them, "Bring her outside the temple to the guards. Put the sword to anyone who follows her." The priest gave this order because he had decided she should not be executed in the LORD's temple. **15** They seized her and took her into the precincts of the royal palace through the horses' entrance. There they executed her.

**16** Jehoiada then drew up a covenant stipulating that he, all the people, and the king should be loyal to the LORD. **17** All the people went and demolished the temple of Baal. They smashed its altars and idols. They killed Mattan the priest of Baal in front of the altars. **18** Jehoiada then assigned the

duties of the LORD's temple to the priests, the Levites whom David had assigned to the LORD's temple. They were responsible for offering burnt sacrifices to the LORD with joy and music, according to the law of Moses and the edict of David. **19** He posted guards at the gates of the LORD's temple, so no one who was ceremonially unclean in any way could enter. **20** He summoned the officers of the units of hundreds, the nobles, the rulers of the people, and all the people of land, and he then led the king down from the LORD's temple.

They entered the royal palace through the Upper Gate and seated the king on the royal throne. **21** All the people of the land celebrated, for the city had rest now that they had killed Athaliah.

**1** Joash was seven years old when he began to reign. He reigned for forty years in Jerusalem. His mother was Zibiah, who was from Beer Sheba.

Guzik - 2 Chronicles 24:1-27

## ***2 Chronicles 24 - The Rise and Fall of Joash***

A. Joash repairs the temple.

1. (1-3) Joash's forty year reign.

Joash *was* seven years old when he became king, and he reigned forty years in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* Zibiah of Beersheba. Joash did *what was* right in the sight of the LORD all the days of Jehoiada the priest. And Jehoiada took two wives for him, and he had sons and daughters.

a. **He reigned forty years in Jerusalem:** This was a long and mostly blessed reign. **Joash** (also called *Jehoash* in 2 Kings 12, simply a variant spelling) fell short of full commitment and complete godliness, but he did advance the cause of God in the kingdom of Judah.

i. "The number of wives and children shows God restoring the years the locusts had eaten." (Selman)

b. **Joash did what was right in the sight of the LORD all the days of Jehoiada the priest:** This implies that

when Jehoiada died, Jehoash no longer did what was right in the sight of the LORD. This chapter will document that Joash turned to idolatry when Jehoiada died, and judgment followed.

2. (4-7) The need and the heart to repair the temple.

Now it happened after this *that* Joash set his heart on repairing the house of the LORD. Then he gathered the priests and the Levites, and said to them, "Go out to the cities of Judah, and gather from all Israel money to repair the house of your God from year to year, and see that you do it quickly." However the Levites did not do it quickly. So the king called Jehoiada the chief *priest*, and said to him, "Why have you not required the Levites to bring in from Judah and from Jerusalem the collection, *according to the commandment* of Moses the servant of the LORD

and of the assembly of Israel, for the tabernacle of witness?" For the sons of Athaliah, that wicked woman, had broken into the house of God, and had also presented all the dedicated things of the house of the LORD to the Baals.

**a. Joash set his heart on repairing the**

**house of the LORD:** This indicated the godly concern that Joash had regarding the condition of the temple. He knew that a prosperous and secure kingdom mattered little if the things of God were neglected or despised.

i. He also knew that the condition of the temple was a valid measurement of the heart and passion of the people of God for the things of God. The temple was not God; but neglect and despising of the temple reflected neglect and despising of God.

**b. Go out to the cities of Judah, and gather from all Israel money to repair the house of your God:** There was not enough money in the royal treasury to underwrite this project.

Therefore the king commanded the Levites in Judah's outer cities to collect money and bring it back for the project in

Jerusalem.

**c. However the Levites did not do it**

**quickly:** For some reason the **Levites** did not share the same passion as King Joash did for the condition of the temple. Perhaps they felt that the townspeople of the outer towns would not embrace and support this work.

Nevertheless, Joash held them to account and got the work moving.

i. " 'But the Levites did not act at once,' both because of natural inertia (still true even of Christian workers), and because of the priestly demands that seem to have exhausted the normal revenues on current

operations and their own support." (Payne) d. **For the sons of Athaliah, that wicked woman, had broken into the house of God:** This explains *why* the temple was in such disrepair. It wasn't just normal wear and tear usage; it was a deliberate campaign against the temple and the worship of the true God prompted by **Athaliah** and her **sons**.

3. (8-14) The temple is repaired and worship is resumed.

Then at the king's command they made a chest, and set it outside at the gate of the house of the LORD. And they made a proclamation throughout Judah and Jerusalem to bring to the LORD the collection *that* Moses the servant of God *had imposed* on Israel in the wilderness. Then all the leaders and all the people rejoiced, brought their contributions, and put *them* into the chest until all had given. So it was, at that time, when the chest was brought to the king's official by the hand of the Levites, and when they saw that *there was* much money, that the king's scribe and the high priest's officer came and emptied the chest, and took it and returned it to its place.

Thus they did day by day, and gathered money in abundance. The king and Jehoiada gave it to those who did the work of the service of the house of the LORD; and they hired masons and carpenters to repair the house of the LORD, and also those who worked in iron and bronze to

restore the house of the LORD. So the workmen labored, and the work was completed by them; they restored the house of God to its original condition and reinforced it. When they had finished, they brought the rest of the money before the king and Jehoiada; they made from it articles for the house of the LORD, articles for serving and offering, spoons and vessels of gold and silver. And they offered burnt offerings in the house of the LORD continually all the days of Jehoiada.

**a. The priest took a chest, bored a hole in its lid, and set it outside at the gate of the house of the LORD:**

Under the direction of King Joash, the priests gave the people the opportunity to give. Even willing givers should be given an opportunity.

i. "Then he placed a collection chest in a strategic location on the right side of the altar, giving the repair project a high priority and a corresponding high visibility." (Dilday) ii. 2Ki. 12:6-13 indicates that part of the problem was poor and wasteful administration. Therefore King Joash got to the heart of the problem and through

Jehoiada the priest, he implemented a system where the money would be set aside, saved, and then wisely spent for the repair and refurbishing of the temple

**b. To bring to the LORD the collection that Moses the servant of God had imposed on Israel in the wilderness:** This recalls the offering that Moses received to build the

tabernacle in Exodus 35. That was a divinely inspired plan to receive freely made offerings from the people of Israel.

i. "The tax itself was based on the half-shekel tax for the *Tent*, though it was also renewed by Nehemiah (Neh. 10:32)." (Selman)

ii. It is possible for God to cause the money and materials to just appear by a miracle.

Yet He chooses to almost always fund His work through the willing gifts of His people.

He works this way because we need to be a giving people.

iii. This idea is echoed in 2Co. 9:7: *So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.*

c. **Thus they did day by day, and gathered money in abundance:** Through the careful and diligent administration of these freely given gifts, an **abundance** of money was gathered for the work. God cares not only that His people give generously, but also that their gifts be diligently and carefully administered.

d. **So the workmen labored, and the work was completed by them:** God's blessing was clearly on the work, but He would not do the work *for* them. So the king and the priest wisely hired the right kind of workers and paid them directly, so that money would not be lost or wasted in administration.

i. "When the people were assured that the money would really be used for the purpose for which it was given, they responded generously and so similar arrangements were continued by Josiah (2Ki. 22:3-7)." (Wiseman)

e. **They brought the rest of the money before the king and Jehoiada:** The people were so generous, and the administration was so wise and honest, that there was an *excess* of money for the restoration project, money which was given to supply new **articles for the house of the LORD**. This was wonderful evidence of both God's blessing and man's generosity and wise stewardship.

i. These replaced "what had been taken away, partly by the Arabian plunderers, and partly by Athaliah's sacrilegious sons." (Trapp)

ii. In all likelihood, this generous giving was somewhat of a surprise. "Which he thought would not be any great sum,

because of the great iniquity and impiety which yet had reigned for many years, and yet continued in the generality of the people of the land, the Levites not excepted, as the last clause of this verse shows." (Poole) 4. (15-16) The death of Jehoiada.

But Jehoiada grew old and was full of days, and he died; *he was* one hundred and thirty years old when he died. And they buried him in the City of David among the kings, because he had done good in Israel, both toward God and His house.

**a. He was one hundred and thirty years**

**old when he died:** This unusually long life for this influential priest was evidence of both God's blessing upon his godly life, and God's mercy towards King Joash and Judah. When Joash was no longer under the influence of Jehoiada, he took a definite turn for the worse, and in His mercy God delayed this as long as possible.

**b. They buried him in the City of David among the kings, because he had done**

**good in Israel:** The measure of his influence is indicated by the honored burial place they gave Jehoiada. The **good** he did in Israel was especially **toward God and His house**.

i. "See the influence of one man. One man can sway a state. One man can check sin.

One man can be the head of a host who shall serve God, and honor his name." (Spurgeon)

B. The apostasy of Joash.

1. (17-19) Joash is influenced to do evil.

Now after the death of Jehoiada the leaders of Judah came and bowed down to the king. And the king listened to them. Therefore they left the house of the LORD God of their fathers, and served wooden images and idols; and wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem because of their trespass. Yet He sent prophets to them, to

bring them back to the LORD; and they testified against them, but they would not listen.

**a. The leaders of Judah came and bowed**

**down to the king. And the king listened to them:** Joash seems to have been a fundamentally weak man; he did good when he was under the influence of the godly Jehoiada, but he did bad when he was under the influence of these **leaders of Judah**, who led them into idolatry.

i. "In most fawning and flattering manner did these court parasites present themselves before him . . . persuading him that during the days of Jehoiada he had been a king without a kingdom, a lord without a

dominion, a subject to his subjects." (Trapp) ii. "Do you not see those gentlemen coming, bowing and scraping a hundred times before they get up to him? They 'made obeisance

to the king.' Jehoiada had not often made much obeisance to him; he had beated him with due respect as his king, but he had also spoken to him honestly and faithfully." (Spurgeon)

iii. "That they might not be confined to unnecessary and troublesome journeys in coming to Jerusalem to worship, but might have the liberty which their forefathers enjoyed of worshipping God in the high places; which liberty, when once they had obtained, they knew they could then worship idols without observation or disturbance, which was the think at which they aimed." (Poole)

iv. "All that Joash had done was to give his heart to Jehoiada, not to Jehovah. It is very easy to be outwardly religious by giving your heart to your mother, or your father, or your aunt, or your uncle, or some good person who helps you to do what is right. You are

doing all this out of love to them, which is at best but a very secondary motive. God says,

'My son, give me thine heart.'" (Spurgeon) b. **Therefore they left the house of the**

**LORD God of their fathers:** They only felt free to worship idols *after* they had forsaken the house of God. It showed both the shallowness of their commitment to God, and the preservative effect of their prior attendance.

i. "Let our church-forsakers chew on this: let them see what good patriots they are." (Trapp)

c. **Yet He sent prophets to them, to bring them back to the LORD; and they testified against them, but they would not listen:** This second sin was greater than the initial sins of weakness and idolatry. Joash would not listen to God's **prophets** or the correction they brought to him.

2. (20-22) Zechariah's message to Joash and his death.

Then the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, who stood above the people, and said to them, "Thus says God: 'Why do you transgress the commandments of the LORD, so that you cannot prosper? Because you have forsaken the LORD, He also has forsaken you.'" So they conspired against him, and at the command of the king they stoned him with stones in the court of the house of the LORD.

Thus Joash the king did not remember the kindness which Jehoiada his father had done to him, but killed his son; and as he died, he said, "The LORD look on *it*, and repay!"

a. **The Spirit of God came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, who stood above the people:** This prophet, the son of the influential priest, had a position of leadership as a priest. The phrase **stood above the people** probably indicates that he was a leading priest, one

who pronounced the priestly benediction over the assembly of Israel.

i. The description of the **Spirit of God**

coming upon Zechariah is significant.

"Therefore God pronounced judgment through a prophesying priest, Jehoiada's son *Zechariah*, whom the *Spirit of God* 'clothed'. Two of the three Old Testament examples of this distinctive expression occur in Chronicles ( *cf.* Jdg. 6:34; 1Ch. 12:18)."

ii. "As we put on a cloak or dress, so does the Spirit of God, as it were, hide Himself in those who surrender themselves to Him, so that it is not they who speak and act, but He within them. . . . Remember the cloth or leather must yield itself easily to the movements of its wearer, and not less pliable and supple must we be to the Spirit of God." (Meyer)

b. **Because you have forsaken the LORD,**

**He also has forsaken you:** The Chronicler includes this aspect of the account – not included in 2 Kings record – especially because this principle was relevant to the returned exiles in the day Chronicles was written. They needed to remember the principle *draw near to God and He will draw near to you* (Jam. 4:8), and the *inverse* of that principle.

c. **So they conspired against him, and at the command of the king they stoned him:** Both the leaders and the common people **conspired** to murder Zechariah. They not only rejected his message, they also silenced the prophet with the words of conviction.

i. "What a most wretched and contemptible man was this, who could imbrue his hands in the blood of a prophet of God, and the son of the man who had saved him from being murdered, and raised him to the throne!

Alas, alas!" (Clarke)

d. **The LORD look on it, and repay!**

Zechariah's dying words were a plea to God, asking *Him* to **repay** according to His justice. It is the perfect prayer of the persecuted, leaving all vengeance in the hand and wisdom of God.

i. "Zechariah is not looking for personal revenge but asking God to act in keeping with his declared principles of justice." (Selman)

ii. "And so he did; for, at the end of that year, the Syrians came against Judah, destroyed all the princes of the people, sent their spoils to Damascus; and Joash, the murderer of the prophet, the son of his benefactor, was himself murdered by his own servants. Here was a most signal display of the divine retribution." (Clarke) iii. This whole evil tragedy is filled with ironies.

- The people did not listen to the command of the LORD, but they did listen to the evil command of King Joash.

- Joash answered the kindness of Jehoiada to him with cruelty to the son of Jehoiada.

- Zechariah was murdered in the same place where his father Jehoiada had anointed Joash king (2Ch. 23:10-11).

3. (23-24) God brings judgment on Judah and Joash through the Syrians

So it happened in the spring of the year *that* the army of Syria came up against him; and they came to Judah and Jerusalem, and destroyed all the leaders of the people from among the people, and sent all their spoil to the king of Damascus.

For the army of the Syrians came with a small company of men; but the LORD delivered a very great army into their

hand, because they had forsaken the LORD God of their fathers. So they executed judgment against Joash.

a. **The army of Syria came up . . . and destroyed all the leaders of the people:** The leaders who were an unwise and ungodly influence upon Joash were the same leaders who were **destroyed** and had their **spoil** plundered.

b. **The army of the Syrians came with a small company of men; but the LORD delivered a very great army into their hand:** Under the judgment of God, the small army of the Syrians overcame the **very great army** of Judah.

i. God promised that His obedient people would be blessed with success far beyond their numbers (Lev. 26:8), and that when disobedient, they would suffer disproportionate defeat (Lev. 26:17, 26:37).

4. (25-27) A wounded Joash is assassinated by his servants. And when they had withdrawn from him (for they left him severely wounded), his own servants conspired against him because of the blood of the sons of Jehoiada the priest, and killed him on his bed. So he died. And they buried him in the City of David, but they did not bury him in the tombs of the kings. These are the ones who conspired against him: Zabad the son of

Shimeath the Ammonitess, and Jehozabad the son of Shimrith the Moabitess. Now *concerning* his sons, and the many oracles about him, and the repairing of the house of God, indeed they *are* written in the annals of the book of the kings.

Then Amaziah his son reigned in his place.

a. **His own servants conspired against him:** This is startling, and shows that the blessing of God long before vanished from the compromised king who began so well, but failed to finish well.

i. They were prompted to assassinate Joash

**because of the blood of the sons of**

**Jehoiada the priest.** Yet there may also have been the fact of the recent defeat by Syria. "The murder of Joash by his *officials* or servants implies that it may have been the result of disaffection following the defeat by Hazael." (Wiseman)

ii. "So disobedience brings its own bitter reward, and what God's people sow they always, in some way or another, reap. Joash abundantly deserved his inglorious and terrible end." (Knapp)

iii. "Thus ended a reign full of promise and hope in the beginning, but profligate, cruel, and ruinous in the end. Never was the hand of God's justice more signally stretched out against an apostate king and faithless people, than at this time." (Clarke)

iv. "The 'many prophecies' about Joash probably refer to such prophetic threatenings as are noted in 2Ch. 24:19-20." (Payne)

**b. They are written in the annals of the book of the kings:** There is no record of repentance on Joash's part. He never came back to or fulfilled his bright early promise.

i. "The fact that he was not honoured by a place in the royal cemetery (in contrast to Jehoiada) is important in Chronicles." (Selman)

ii. "Yes, and there are some whose hearts are not right towards God, who nevertheless are very zealous about the externals of divine worship. It is a much easier thing to build a temple for God than it is to be a temple for God; and it is a much more common thing for persons to show zeal in repairing temples than in reforming their own manners." (Spurgeon)

iii. "There was a want of principle in Joash, and it is of that I want to warn all our friends. Do not, I pray you, be satisfied with the practice of piety without the principles of piety. It is not enough to have a correct creed; you must have a renewed heart. It is not sufficient to have an ornate ritual; you must have a holy life, and to be holy you must be renewed by the Holy Spirit. If this change is not wrought in you by the Holy Ghost, you who yield so readily to good will yield just as quickly to evil." (Spurgeon) iv. "The study of the story of Joash offers a striking illustration of how a weak man is easily influenced. It emphasizes the need of strong individual character, which can only be created by direct dealing with God." (Morgan)

v. "However valuable the influence of a good man may be, it remains true that if a man have nothing more to lean on than that, if it should fail, collapse is almost inevitable. All foundations fail, save one." (Morgan) © 2006 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission

**2** Joash did what the LORD approved throughout the lifetime of Jehoiada the priest. **3** Jehoiada chose two wives for him who gave him sons and daughters.

**4** Joash was determined to repair the LORD's temple. **5** He assembled the priests and Levites and ordered them, "Go out to the cities of Judah and collect the annual quota of silver from all Israel for repairs on the temple of your God. Be quick about it!" But the Levites delayed.

**6** So the king summoned Jehoiada the chief priest, and said to him, "Why have you not made the Levites collect from Judah and Jerusalem the tax authorized by Moses the LORD's servant and by the assembly of Israel at the tent containing the tablets of the law?" **7** (Wicked Athaliah and her sons had broken into God's temple and used all the holy items of the LORD's temple in their worship of the Baals.) **8** The king

ordered a chest to be made and placed outside the gate of the LORD's temple. **9** An edict was sent throughout Judah and Jerusalem requiring the people to bring to the LORD the tax that Moses, God's servant, imposed on Israel in the wilderness. **10** All the officials and all the people gladly brought their silver and threw it into the chest until it was full. **11** Whenever the Levites brought the chest to the royal accountant and they saw there was a lot of silver, the royal scribe and the accountant of the high priest emptied the chest and then took it back to its place. They went through this routine every day and collected a large amount of silver. **12** The king and Jehoiada gave it to the construction foremen assigned to the LORD's temple. They hired carpenters and craftsmen to repair the LORD's temple, as well as those skilled in working with iron and bronze to restore the LORD's temple. **13** They worked hard and made the repairs. They followed the measurements specified for God's temple and restored it. **14** When they were finished, they brought the rest of the silver to the king and Jehoiada. They used it to make items for the LORD's temple, including items used in the temple service and for burnt sacrifices, pans, and various other gold and silver items. Throughout Jehoiada's lifetime, burnt sacrifices were offered regularly in the LORD's temple.

**15** Jehoiada grew old and died at the age of 130. **16** He was buried in the City of David with the kings, because he had accomplished good in Israel and for God and his temple.

**17** After Jehoiada died, the officials of Judah visited the king and declared their loyalty to him. The king listened to their advice. **18** They abandoned the temple of the LORD

God of their ancestors, and worshiped the Asherah poles and idols. Because of this sinful activity, God was angry with Judah and Jerusalem. **19** The LORD sent prophets among them to lead them back to him. They warned the people, but they would not pay attention. **20** God's Spirit energized Zechariah son of Jehoiada the priest. He stood up before the

people and said to them, “This is what God says: ‘Why are you violating the commands of the LORD?

You will not be prosperous! Because you have rejected the LORD, he has rejected you!’” **21** They plotted against him and by royal decree stoned him to death in the courtyard of the LORD’s temple. **22** King Joash disregarded the loyalty his father Jehoiada had shown him and killed Jehoiada’s son. As Zechariah was dying, he said, “May the LORD take notice and seek vengeance!”

**23** At the beginning of the year the Syrian army attacked Joash and invaded Judah and Jerusalem. They wiped out all the leaders of the people and sent all the plunder they gathered to the king of Damascus. **24** Even though the invading Syrian army was relatively weak, the LORD handed over to them Judah’s very large army, for the people of Judah had abandoned the LORD God of their ancestors. The Syrians gave Joash what he deserved. **25**

When they withdrew, they left Joash badly wounded. His servants plotted against him because of what he had done to the son of Jehoiada the priest. They murdered him on his bed. Thus he died and was buried in the City of David, but not in the tombs of the kings. **26** The conspirators were Zabad son of Shimeath (an Ammonite woman) and Jehozabad son of Shimrith (a Moabite woman).

**27** The list of Joash’s sons, the many prophetic oracles pertaining to him, and the account of his building project on God’s temple are included in the record of the Scroll of the Kings. His son Amaziah replaced him as king.

**1** Amaziah was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned for twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother was Jehoaddan, who was from Jerusalem.

Guzik - 2 Chronicles 25:1-28

### ***2 Chronicles 25 - The Reign of Amaziah***

A. His victory over Edom.

1. (1-2) The limited good of the reign of Amaziah.

Amaziah *was* twenty-five years old *when* he became king, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* Jehoaddan of Jerusalem. And he did *what was* right in the sight of the LORD, but not with a loyal heart.

a. **He did what was right in the sight of the LORD:**

Amaziah, son of the great reformer Joash, continued the generally godly reign began by his father.

i. "He made a good beginning in thus adhering closely to the law. Happy would it have been for him and for his kingdom had

he continued as he began." (Knapp)

b. **But not with a loyal heart:** Compared to Joash, Amaziah faithfully continued his policies.

Yet some of those policies allowed compromises, such as the allowing of continued sacrifices and incense offerings *on the high places* (2Ki. 14:1-4). Compared to David - the greatest merely human king to reign over the people of God - Amaziah did not match up favorably (2Ki. 14:1-4).

i. "The root idea of the Hebrew word translated 'perfect' [**loyal** in the NKJV] is being whole, complete. Imperfection of heart consists in incomplete surrender. Some chamber of the temple is retained for selfish purposes. What it was in the case of Amaziah we are not told, but the fact remains that notwithstanding the general direction of his life . . . the whole heart was not set on doing the will of God." (Morgan) 2. (3-4) An example Amaziah's obedience.

Now it happened, as soon as the kingdom was established for him, that he executed his servants who had murdered his father the king. However he did not execute their children, but *did as it is* written in the Law in the Book of Moses, where the LORD commanded, saying, "The fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor shall the children be

put to death for their fathers; but a person shall die for his own sin."

a. **He executed his servants who had**

**murdered his father the king:** This was both just and in the best interest of Amaziah. It was good for him to eliminate those who found the assassination of the king a reasonable way to change the kingdom.

i. It also fulfilled God's command to punish murderers with execution, first given in Gen.

9:5-7.

b. **He did not execute their children, but did as it is written in the Law of the Book of Moses:**

It was the standard practice of the ancient world to execute not only the guilty party in such a murder, but also their family.

Amaziah went against the conventional practice of his day and obeyed the word of God instead (Deu. 24:16).

i. "Wherein he showed some faith and courage, that he would obey this command of God, though it was very hazardous to himself, such persons being likely to seek revenge for their father's death." (Poole) 3. (5-8) Preparations for battle against Edom.

Moreover Amaziah gathered Judah together and set over them captains of thousands and captains of hundreds, according to *their* fathers' houses, throughout all Judah and Benjamin; and he numbered them from twenty years old and

above, and found them to be three hundred thousand choice *men*, *able* to go to war, who could handle spear and shield. He also hired one hundred thousand mighty men of valor from Israel for one hundred talents of silver. But a man of God came to him, saying, "O king, do not let the army of Israel go with you, for the LORD *is* not with Israel; *not with* any of the children of Ephraim. But if you go, be gone! Be strong in battle! *Even so*, God

shall make you fall before the enemy; for God has power to help and to overthrow."

a. **He also hired one hundred thousand**

**mighty men of valor from Israel:** In

assembling an army (that would eventually fight against Edom), Amaziah **hired** mercenary troops from the northern tribes of Israel. This was a common practice in the ancient world.

b. **O king, do not let the army of Israel go with you, for the LORD is not with Israel:** This anonymous prophet warned King Amaziah to not use the Israelite troops that he had hired.

Going further, he warned him that if he should go to battle using these Israelite troops, **God shall make you fall before the enemy.**

i. Even though it made military sense for Amaziah to hire and use these troops, according to the word from God, it made no spiritual sense. This is because **God has power to help and to overthrow.** To fight *with* God is to receive His **help**; to fight *against* Him is have God **overthrow** you.

4. (9) Amaziah's question and the answer from the prophet. Then Amaziah said to the man of God, "But what *shall we* do about the hundred talents which I have given to the troops of Israel?" And the man of God answered, "The LORD is able to give you much more than this."

a. **But what shall we do about the hundred talents which I have given to the troops of Israel?** Amaziah heard and understood the word of God from His messenger. Yet his question was familiar: "How much will it cost me to be obedient?" This is not necessarily a bad question to ask, if we are willing to be persuaded by the LORD's answer.

b. **The LORD is able to give you much more than this:** The prophet wisely answered Amaziah. Whatever obedience costs, it is always ultimately cheaper than disobedience.

i. "But you say that you have already

entered into so close an alliance that you cannot draw back. You have invested your capital, you have gone to great expenditure.

Yet it will be better to forfeit these than Him." (Meyer)

5. (10-13) Amaziah's obedience and the victory over Edom.

So Amaziah discharged the troops that had come to him from Ephraim, to go back home. Therefore their anger was greatly aroused against Judah, and they returned home in great anger. Then Amaziah strengthened himself, and leading his people, he went to the Valley of Salt and killed ten thousand of the people of Seir. Also the children of Judah took captive ten thousand alive, brought them to the top of the rock, and cast them down from the top of the rock, so that they all were dashed in pieces. But as for the soldiers of the army which Amaziah had discharged, so that they would not go with him to battle, they raided the cities of Judah from Samaria to Beth Horon, killed three thousand in them, and took much spoil.

a. **So Amaziah discharged the troops that had come to him from Ephraim, to go back home:** He had paid them as promised, trusting that God was able to return to him *much more*, and he sent them home in faith, trusting God to both protect and provide.

i. This **greatly aroused** the dismissed army against Judah, probably because they counted on the anticipated plunder as additional income.

ii. "The Israelites' *great rage*, repeated in Hebrew for emphasis, shows further why they Lord is not with them." (Selman)

b. **Amaziah strengthened himself, and leading his people, he went to the Valley of Salt and killed ten thousand of the people of Seir:** Walking in obedience to God, Amaziah saw the victory God promised. The

Edomites, who had apparently rebelled against Judah's authority, were defeated.

i. "His victory is definite enough, though it is achieved without any acknowledgment of God's help and with excessive violence." (Selman)

**c. They raided the cities of Judah from Samaria to Beth Horon, killed three thousand in them, and took much spoil:**

This shows the wickedness of the dismissed

Israelite soldiers and their hunger for plunder and **spoil**. They were determined to enrich themselves through conquest, beyond their soldier's wages.

i. "Because they were both disgraced by this rejection, and disappointed of that prey and spoil which they hoped to gain, whereas now they were sent away empty; for the one hundred talents probably were given to their officers only to raise men for this service; that sum being otherwise too small to be distributed into so many hands." (Poole)

ii. "The soldiers of Israel committed depredations on their way back. This was the result of folly and sin of Amaziah's proposal. We may be forgiven, and delivered, and yet there will be after-consequences which will follow us from some ill-considered act. Sin may be forgiven, but its secondary results are sometimes very bitter." (Meyer)

B. Amaziah's sin and the judgment against him.

1. (14-16) Amaziah's strange idolatry and arrogance.

Now it was so, after Amaziah came from the slaughter of the Edomites, that he brought the gods of the people of Seir, set them up *to be* his gods, and bowed down before them and burned incense to them. Therefore the

anger of the LORD was aroused against Amaziah, and He sent him a prophet who said to him, "Why have you sought the gods of the people, which could not rescue their own people from your hand?" So it was, as he talked with him, that *the king* said to him, "Have we made you the king's counselor?"

Cease! Why should you be killed?" Then the prophet ceased, and said, "I know that God has determined to destroy you, because you have done this and have not heeded my advice."

a. **He brought the gods of the people of Seir, set them up to be his gods, and bowed down before them:**

This action of Amaziah shows the deep foolishness of idolatry.

These **gods of the people of Seir** were unable to defend or help the Edomites, yet he worshipped them. God sent a prophet to make this point clear to King Amaziah.

i. "Amaziah's achievement seems to bring out the worst in him. Whereas he had

previously made some response to God, now

he turns to idolatry, persecution, revenge, intransigence, pride, and

apostasy." (Selman)

b. **Have we made you the king's**

**counselor? Cease!** The king arrogantly silenced the prophet, yet pronounced a final word of judgment against Amaziah.

i. This was a rejection of God's mercy to

Amaziah. God was kind to send him a

correcting prophet "When he might have sent him to hell with a thunderbolt; as the patientest man upon hearth would have

done likely, had he been in God's place and power." (Trapp)

2. (17-20) The king of Israel warns the king of Judah.

Now Amaziah king of Judah asked advice and

sent to Joash the son of Jehoahaz, the son of Jehu, king of Israel, saying, "Come, let us face one another *in battle*." And Joash king of Israel sent to Amaziah king of Judah, saying, "The thistle that *was* in Lebanon sent to the cedar that was in Lebanon, saying, 'Give your daughter to my son as wife'; and a wild beast that *was* in Lebanon passed by and trampled the thistle.

Indeed you say that you have defeated the Edomites, and your heart is lifted up to boast.

Stay at home now; why should you meddle with trouble, that you should fall; you and Judah with you?" But Amaziah would not heed, for it *came* from God, that He might give them into the hand *of their enemies*, because they sought the gods of Edom.

a. **Come, let us face one another in battle:** Proud from his success against Edom, Amaziah decided to make war against the northern kingdom of Israel, no doubt in retaliation for the plundering attacks by the dismissed mercenaries of Israel (2Ch. 25:5-16).

i. He had reason to believe he would be successful. He had recently assembled a 300,000 man army that killed 20,000 Edomites in a victory over Edom (2Ch. 25:5, 11-12). King Joash (Jehoahaz) of Israel seemed very weak, having only 50 horsemen, 10 chariots, and 10,000 foot soldiers after being defeated by the Syrians (2Ki. 13:7).

b. **The thistle that was in Lebanon:** The reply of Joash king of Israel was both wise and diplomatic. With this little story and its application, he counseled Amaziah to glory in his previous victory over Edom but then to **stay at home**.

i. "The thistle, imagining himself to be equal with the cedar, presumptuously suggested a marriage alliance between them. The difference between the two was made obvious when a wild beast passed through

and crushed the thistle underfoot. Of course the beast was powerless to injure the cedar." (Dilday)

**c. Why should you meddle with trouble so that you fall; you and Judah with you?**

Amaziah should have listened to this word from Jehoash, but he didn't. He provoked a fight he should have avoided, and did not consider both the likelihood of success and the effect his defeat would have on the whole kingdom of Judah.

**d. It came from God, that He might give them into the hand of their enemies, because they sought the gods of Edom:** Because of Amaziah's foolish embrace of idolatry, God allowed him to enter into a foolish war with Israel. Foolish idols led him into foolish choices, and the wise God in heaven allowed him to experience the effect of these choices.

i. " *It came of God*, who gave him up to his own error and passion, in order to his ruin." (Poole)

3. (21-24) Proud King Amaziah is defeated by Israel.

So Joash king of Israel went out; and he and Amaziah king of Judah faced one another at Beth Shemesh, which *belongs* to Judah. And Judah was defeated by Israel, and every man fled to his tent. Then Joash the king of Israel captured Amaziah king of Judah, the son of Joash, the son of Jehoahaz, at Beth Shemesh; and he brought him to Jerusalem, and broke down the wall of Jerusalem from the Gate of Ephraim to the Corner Gate; four hundred cubits. And *he took* all the gold and silver, all the articles that were found in the house of God with Obed-Edom, the treasures of the king's house, and hostages, and returned to Samaria.

**a. Israel captured Amaziah king of Judah:** Because of his foolish attack against Israel, Amaziah *lost his freedom* and for a time became a prisoner of the king of Israel.

i. "His name means 'strength of Jah'; but we read, 'he strengthened *himself*' (2Ch.

25:11); his character of self-sufficiency thus belying his name - a thing not uncommon in our day." (Knapp)

b. **Broke down the wall of Jerusalem:** Because of his foolish attack against Israel, Amaziah *saw the defenses of Jerusalem broken down*. Not only did they lose the battle at Beth Shemesh, but they were also in a weaker position to face future attacks.

c. **And he took all the gold and silver:** Because of his foolish attack against Israel, Amaziah *lost the treasure of the people of God*.

It wasn't just a loss of his *personal* wealth (**the treasuries of the king's house**), but also of the **gold and silver** of God's people. Amaziah didn't have the wisdom to see how losing this battle would hurt others as well as himself.

i. This even extended to **hostages** who were taken from Jerusalem to Samaria. The

decision to attack Israel was his alone, but the price paid for the foolish attack was paid by the whole kingdom of Judah. It is a sober warning to all leaders, to consider how their foolish decisions affect many other people.

ii. "The quarrel of Amaziah was certainly *just*, yet he was put to the rout; he did *meddle to his hurt*; he fell, and Judah fell with him, as Jehoshaphat had said." (Clarke) 4. (25-28) He is hated and killed by his own subjects.

Amaziah the son of Joash, king of Judah, lived fifteen years after the death of Joash the son of Jehoahaz, king of Israel. Now the rest of the acts of Amaziah, from first to last, indeed *are* they not written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel? After the time that Amaziah turned away from following the LORD, they made a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem, and he fled to Lachish; but they sent after him to Lachish and killed him there. Then they brought him on horses and buried him with his fathers in the City of Judah.

**a. They made a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem:**

The embarrassing loss against Israel undermined Amaziah's support among the leaders of Judah.

i. He lived **fifteen years** after the death of Jehoash (which probably prompted his

release from imprisonment in Israel), "But it was a kind of a lifeless life . . . He lay all the while under the hatred and contempt of his subjects." (Trapp)

ii. "At a preliminary stage his sixteen-year-old son Uzziah was elevated to coregency -

and to actual rule - in 790 B.C." (Payne)

**b. He fled to Lachish; but they sent after him to Lachish and killed him there:** Amaziah tried but was unable to escape the conspirators. He was assassinated, just like his father was (2Ki. 12:20-21).

i. "Lachish was the first of the cities of Judah to adopt the idolatries of the kingdom of

Israel ('the beginning of the sin to the daughter of Zion: for the transgressions of Israel were found in thee,' Mic. 1:13), and it was natural for the idolatrous Amaziah to seek an asylum there." (Knapp)

ii. 'He no doubt became very unpopular after having lost the battle with the Israelites; the consequence of which was the dismantling of Jerusalem, and the seizure of the royal

treasures, with several other evils. It is likely that the last *fifteen* years of his reign were greatly embittered: so that, finding the royal city to be no place of *safety*, he endeavoured to secure himself at Lachish;

but all in vain, for thither his murderers

pursued him; and he who forsook the Lord

was forsaken by every friend, perished in his gainsaying, and came to an untimely

end." (Clarke)

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**2** He did what the LORD approved, but not with wholehearted devotion.

**3** When he had secured control of the kingdom, he executed the servants who had assassinated his father. **4**

However, he did not execute their sons. He obeyed the LORD's commandment as recorded in the law scroll of Moses, "Fathers must not be executed for what their sons do, and sons must not be executed for what their fathers do. A man must be executed only for his own sin." **5**

Amaziah assembled the people of Judah and assigned them by families to the commanders of units of a thousand and the commanders of units of a hundred for all Judah and Benjamin. He counted those twenty years old and up and discovered there were 300,000 young men of fighting age equipped with spears and shields. **6** He hired 100,000 Israelite warriors for a hundred talents of silver.

**7** But a prophet visited him and said: "O king, the Israelite troops must not go with you, for the LORD is not with Israel or any of the Ephraimites. **8** Even if you go and fight bravely in battle, God will defeat you before the enemy. God is capable of helping or defeating." **9** Amaziah asked the prophet: "But what should I do about the hundred talents of silver I paid the Israelite troops?" The prophet replied, "The LORD is capable of giving you more than that." **10** So Amaziah dismissed the troops that had come to him from Ephraim and sent them home. They were very angry at Judah and returned home incensed. **11**

Amaziah boldly led his army to the Valley of Salt, where he defeated 10,000 Edomites. **12** The men of Judah captured 10,000 men alive. They took them to the top of a cliff and threw them over. All the captives fell to their death. **13**

Now the troops Amaziah had dismissed and had not allowed to fight in the battle raided the cities of Judah from Samaria to Beth Horon. They killed 3,000 people and carried off a large amount of plunder.

**14** When Amaziah returned from defeating the Edomites, he brought back the gods of the people of Seir and made them his personal gods. He bowed down before them and offered them sacrifices. **15** The LORD was angry at Amaziah and sent a prophet to him, who said, "Why are you following these gods that could not deliver their own people from your power?" **16** While he was speaking, Amaziah said to him, "Did we appoint you to be a royal counselor? Stop prophesying or else you will be killed!" So the prophet stopped, but added, "I know that the LORD has decided to destroy you, because you have done this thing and refused to listen to my advice."

**17** After King Amaziah of Judah consulted with his advisers, he sent this message to the king of Israel, Joash son of Jehoahaz, the son of Jehu, "Come, face me on the battlefield." **18** King Joash of Israel sent this message back to King Amaziah of Judah, "A thorn bush in Lebanon sent this message to a cedar in Lebanon, 'Give your daughter to my son as a wife.' Then a wild animal of Lebanon came by and trampled down the thorn bush. **19** You defeated Edom and it has gone to your head. Gloat over your success, but stay in your palace. Why bring calamity on yourself? Why bring down yourself and Judah along with you?"

**20** But Amaziah did not heed the warning, for God wanted to hand them over to Joash because they followed the gods of Edom. **21** So King Joash of Israel attacked. He and King Amaziah of Judah faced each other on the battlefield in Beth Shemesh of Judah. **22** Judah was defeated by Israel, and each man ran back home. **23** King Joash of Israel captured King Amaziah of Judah, son of Joash son of Jehoahaz, in Beth Shemesh and brought him to Jerusalem. He broke down the wall of Jerusalem from the Gate of Ephraim to the Corner Gate – a distance of about six hundred feet. **24** He took away all the gold and silver, all the items found in God's temple that were in the care of Obed-Edom, the riches in the

royal palace, and some hostages. Then he went back to Samaria.

**25** King Amaziah son of Joash of Judah lived for fifteen years after the death of King Joash son of Jehoahaz of Israel. **26** The rest of the events of Amaziah's reign, from start to finish, are recorded in the Scroll of the Kings of Judah and Israel. **27** From the time Amaziah turned from following the LORD, conspirators plotted against him in Jerusalem, so he fled to Lachish. But they sent assassins after him and they killed him there. **28** His body was carried back by horses, and he was buried in Jerusalem with his ancestors in the City of David.

**1** All the people of Judah took Uzziah, who was sixteen years old, and made him king in his father Amaziah's place.

Guzik - 2 Chronicles 26:1-23

## ***2 Chronicles 26 - The Reign of Uzziah***

A. The years of blessing and strength.

1. (1-5) The overview of Uzziah's reign.

Now all the people of Judah took Uzziah, who *was* sixteen years old, and made him king instead of his father Amaziah. He built Elath and restored it to Judah, after the king rested with his fathers.

Uzziah *was* sixteen years old when he became king, and he reigned fifty-two years in Jerusalem.

His mother's name was Jecholiah of Jerusalem.

And he did *what was* right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Amaziah had done. He sought God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding in the visions of God; and as long as he sought the LORD, God made him prosper.

a. **He did what was right in the sight of the LORD:** The reign of Uzziah was largely characterized by the good he did **in the sight of the LORD**. His godliness was rewarded with a long reign of 52 years.

i. Uzziah came to the throne in a difficult era: "Following the tragic events that brought King Amaziah's reign to an end,

Jerusalem was in disarray, a major section of its protective wall destroyed, its temple and palace emptied of their treasures, and some of its inhabitants taken away to Israel as hostages." (Dilday)

ii. Knapp suggests that Uzziah became king in an unusual manner: "He seems to have come by the throne, not in the way of ordinary succession, but by the direct choice of the people. The princes had been destroyed by the Syrians toward the close of his grandfather Joash's reign (2Ch. 24:23), leaving the people a free hand."

iii. **Now all the people of Judah took**

**Uzziah:** "The idea that the king could be chosen by the will of the people was never entirely lost in Judah." (Selman)

b. **As long as he sought the LORD, God**

**made him prosper:** This generally mixed review of Uzziah's reign is also indicated by 2Ki.

15:1-4, which tells us that Uzziah (also called *Azariah* in 2 Kings) did not remove the *high places*, traditional places of sacrifice to the LORD and sometimes doorways to idolatry.

i. "The two names are best understood as variants arising from the interchangeability of two closely related Hebrew roots." (Selman)

2. (6-15) The strength, security, and fame of Uzziah's reign. Now he went out and made war against the Philistines, and broke down the wall of Gath, the wall of Jabneh, and the wall of Ashdod; and he built cities *around* Ashdod and among the Philistines. God helped him against the Philistines, against the Arabians who lived in Gur Baal, and against the Meunites. Also the Ammonites brought tribute to Uzziah. His fame spread as far as the entrance of Egypt, for he became exceedingly strong. And Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem at the Corner Gate, at the Valley Gate, and at the corner

buttress of the wall; then he fortified them. Also he built towers in the desert.

He dug many wells, for he had much livestock, both in the lowlands and in the plains; *he also had* farmers and vinedressers in the mountains and in Carmel, for he loved the soil. Moreover Uzziah had an army of fighting men who went out to war by companies, according to the number on their roll as prepared by Jeiel the scribe and Maaseiah the officer, under the hand of Hananiah, *one* of the king's captains. The total number of chief officers of the mighty men of valor *was* two thousand six hundred. And under their authority *was* an army of three hundred and seven thousand five hundred, that made war with mighty power, to help the king against the enemy. Then Uzziah prepared for them, for the entire army, shields, spears, helmets, body armor, bows, and slings *to cast* stones. And he made devices in Jerusalem, invented by skillful men, to be on the towers and the corners, to shoot arrows and large stones. So his fame spread far and wide, for he was marvelously helped till he became strong.

a. **He went out and made ware against the Philistines:** Uzziah was active in opposing the ancient enemies of the Israelites. The Philistines may also have been active against Judah in the not too distant past, perhaps being among those *who came with the Arabians* and massacred many of the royal family of David (2Ch. 22:1).

i. With this heart to make war against their ancient enemies, no wonder that **God**

**helped him against the Philistines.**

ii. "The Philistines lost two of their major cities, *Gath* and *Ashdod* as well as *Jabneh*.

The latter was formerly Jabneel of Judah (Jos. 15:11) and later became Jamnia where the Sanhedrin was re-formed after Jerusalem's destruction in A.D.

70." (Selman)

**b. The Ammonites brought tribute to**

**Uzziah:** This was another example of the strength of Uzziah's kingdom. He exacted

**tribute** from the **Ammonites**, which was like a tax that recognized their lower place under Judah.

**c. His fame spread . . . he built towers . . .**

**He dug many wells . . . Uzziah had an**

**army . . . he made devices in Jerusalem:** Uzziah was a remarkable king, who had a broad interest in the improvement of his kingdom.

Because of his many achievements, it was fitting that his **fame spread** among other nations.

i. "The reality of Uzziah's 'towers of the desert' (of arid southern Judah) has been

validated by the discovery of an eighth-century tower at Qumran." (Payne)

ii. "Repairs in Jerusalem were necessitated by the damage incurred during the previous reign (note the specific mention of the *Corner Gate* in 2Ch. 25:23) and possibly by an earthquake (Amo. 1:1; Zec. 14:5)." (Selman)

iii. One unique description of Uzziah is that **he loved the soil**. This shows that he had a mind and a heart for more than technology and fame; he also had an interest in practical matters and things that benefited the majority of his people.

iv. "This is a perfection in a king: on husbandry every state depends. Let their

trade or commerce be what they may, there

can be no true national prosperity if

agriculture do not prosper; for the king

himself is served by the field." (Clarke)

**d. He made devices in Jerusalem, invented by skillful men, to be on the towers and the corners, to shoot arrows and large stones:** There is some debate and even controversy

as to if these were *defensive* or *offensive* inventions. If it does describe the invention of catapults, it is a remarkable thing that Uzziah and his men invented such things more than two hundred years before archaeological evidence suggests.

i. "His (literally) 'inventions' were probably protective shields or screens on city walls enabling archers and others to operate in comparative safety." (Selman)

ii. Yet Clarke quotes a Targum at 2Ch.

26:15: "He made in Jerusalem ingenious instruments, and little hollow towers, to

stand upon the towers and upon the bastions, for the shooting of arrows, and projecting of great stones."

iii. "This is the very first imitation on record of any warlike engines for the *attack* or *defence* of besieged places; and this account is long prior to any thing of the kind among either the Greeks or the Romans. . . . The *Jews* alone were the inventors of such engines; and the invention took place in the reign of Uzziah, about *eight hundred* years before the Christian era. It is no wonder that, in the consequence of this, *his name spread far abroad*, and struck terror into his enemies." (Clarke) e. **For he was marvelously helped till he became strong:**

At the end of this extended section praising and promoting the goodness of Uzziah's reign, we read this ominous word. At some point in his success, he began to turn from God's help and began to trust in his own strength.

i. "The chief reason for Uzziah's success is God's *help*. This is a special word in Chronicles ( *cf. e.g.* 1Ch. 12:19; 2Ch. 14:10; 25:8) whose meaning is equivalent in the New Testament to the enabling work of the

Holy Spirit ( *cf.* Rom. 8:26; 2Ti. 1:14; *cf.* Act. 26:22; 1Th. 2:2)." (Selman)

B. Uzziah's sin and punishment.

1. (16) The proud heart of Uzziah.

But when he was strong his heart was lifted up, to *his* destruction, for he transgressed against the LORD his God by entering the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar of incense.

a. **When he was strong his heart was lifted up, to his destruction:** Uzziah is a prominent example of a man who handled adversity better than success.

i. "The history of men affords persistent witness to the subtle perils which are

created by prosperity. More men are blasted by it than by adversity. . . . Prosperity

always puts the soul in danger of pride, of the heart lifted up; and pride ever goeth

before destruction, and a haughty spirit

before a fall." (Morgan)

ii. "God cannot trust some of us with

prosperity and success, because our nature

could not stand them. We must tug at the

oar, instead of spreading the sail, because we have not enough ballast." (Meyer)

b. **He transgressed against the LORD his**

**God by entering the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar:** Azariah violated what had become a

general principle in God's dealing with Israel: that no king should also be a priest, and that the offices of prophet, priest, and king should not be combined in one man -

*until* the Messiah, who fulfilled all three offices.

i. "Uzziah is *unfaithful* (2Ch. 26:16, 18). This is the most important expression for sin in Chronicles, and it can bring down a dynasty (1Ch. 10:13) or take a nation into exile (1Ch. 5:25; 9:1; 2Ch. 33:19; 36:14). The

term has not appeared since Rehoboam's

time (2Ch. 12:2) but now will become a

regular theme to the end of the

book." (Selman)

ii. "Uzziah's problem was that he was not content with the authority God had given him and wanted to add more priestly functions to his royal power. Absolute power, however, has no place in God's kingdom." (Selman)

2. (17-21) Confrontation and a fitting punishment.

So Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him were eighty priests of the LORD; valiant men. And they withstood King Uzziah, and said to him, "*It is not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the LORD, but for the priests, the sons of Aaron, who are consecrated to burn incense. Get out of the sanctuary, for you have trespassed! You shall have no honor from the LORD God.*" Then Uzziah became furious; and he *had* a censer in his hand to burn incense. And while he was angry with the priests, leprosy broke out on his forehead, before the priests in the house of the LORD, beside the incense altar. And Azariah the chief priest and all the priests looked at him, and there, on his forehead, he *was* leprous; so they thrust him out of that place. Indeed he also hurried to get out, because the LORD had struck him. King Uzziah was a leper until the day of his death. He dwelt in an isolated house, because he was a leper; for he was cut off from the house of the LORD. Then Jotham his son *was* over the king's house, judging the people of the land.

a. **So Azariah the priest went in after him:** It took courage to confront a king, an heir of King David, a commander of the armies of Judah. Yet Azariah the priest knew that King Uzziah's crime was so great that it justified this confrontation.

b. **It is not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the LORD, but for the priests:** Azariah simply called Uzziah to recognize this longstanding principle. God clearly declared that only the descendants of Aaron could come to Him as priests (excepting the priesthood according to Melchizedek, which priesthood

Jesus belonged to).

**c. The Uzziah became furious . . . leprosy broke out on his forehead:** With his head full of pride and fury, Uzziah began to see leprosy break out upon his head. No doubt he first saw the problem in the faces of the horrified priests who looked at the leprosy as it first appeared on his face.

i. " *The leprosy even rose up in his forehead; so as he could not hide his shame; though it is probable it was also in the rest of his body.*" (Poole)

ii. "Despite the seriousness of what Uzziah had done, God still does not act until Uzziah becomes 'enraged', an emphatic word occurring twice in verse 19. God's righteous anger only breaks out against human rebellious anger." (Selman)

**d. Indeed he also hurried to get out, because the LORD had struck him:** Uzziah would not listen to the Biblical commands and customs that forbade him to enter the temple and offer incense. He would not listen to the rebuke and warning from the priests. Yet he did listen to the judgment of God against him, and he finally **hurried to get out.**

**e. King Uzziah was a leper until the day of his death:** Uzziah came into the temple as an arrogant king, and he left as a humbled leper and stayed that way for the remainder of his life. He could not even go into the outer courts of the temple which were once open to him as to other worshippers (**he was cut off from the house of the LORD**). In overstepping this boundary, he found his freedom more restricted than ever before.

i. "It was a fearful stroke from God. Death was the actual penalty enjoined by the law from his crime (Num. 18:7), and leprosy was really that - a living death, prolonged and intensified." (Knapp)

ii. "He who could not content himself with God's allowance, but usurped the priest's place and office, is now deprived of the privilege of the meanest of his people, a just and most suitable judgment." (Poole)

3. (22-23) The death and burial of King Uzziah.

Now the rest of the acts of Uzziah, from first to last, the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz wrote.

So Uzziah rested with his fathers, and they buried him with his fathers in the field of burial which *belonged* to the kings, for they said, "He is a leper." Then Jotham his son reigned in his place.

a. **The rest of the acts of Uzziah, from first to last, the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz wrote:** This connection between Isaiah and Uzziah is noted in Isa. 6:1, when the death of the king contributed to the call of the prophet: *In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne* (Isa. 6:1).

i. It is important to consider the reign of Uzziah in totality:

- He began his reign at only 16 years of age.

- He reigned for 52 years.

- Overall, he was a good and strong king who led Israel to many military victories and who was an energetic builder and planner.

- Despite all this, Azariah had a tragic end.

ii. Therefore, when Isaiah wrote that he was called *in the year King Uzziah died*, he said a lot. It is to say, "In the year a great and wise king died." But it is also to say, "In the year a great and wise king who had a tragic end died." Isaiah had great reason to be discouraged and disillusioned at the death of King Uzziah, because a great king had passed away, and because his life ended tragically. Yet despite it all, he saw the

enthroned LORD God who was greater than any earthly king.

b. **For they said, "He is a leper"** : This is a sad and somewhat unfortunate summation of a mostly great king of Judah; yet it shows the great expense and tragedy of not finishing well, and that late mistakes and scandals can color a whole lifetime or career.

i. "This is the last of three successive reigns which concludes with a period of

disobedience and disaster, and it seems that nothing is able to prevent Judah and their

kings sliding into sin and judgment. Idolatry, rejection of the prophets, violence, and pride repeat themselves with devastating regularity." (Selman)

ii. "Though Uzziah's pride did not cause the exile, it is an excellent illustration of why the exile eventually came about. From now on, Judah's end is definitely in sight." (Selman)

iii. "Reference to a separate burial place may be confirmed by an ossuary inscription of the Hasmonean period: 'Here were brought

the bones of Uzziah, king of Judah, and not to be moved.'" (Selman)

iv. "I have lived long enough to observe that the greatest faults that are ever committed by professedly Christian men are not committed by young people. Most painful is

it, to me to remember that the worst cases

of backsliding and apostasy that I have ever seen, in this church, have been by old men

and middle-aged men, - not by young

people; for, somehow or other, the young

people, if they are truly taught of God, know their weakness, and so they cry to God for

help; but it often happens that more

experienced people begin to think that they are not likely to fall into the faults and follies of the young; and I care not

how old a man may be - even if seven centuries had passed over his head:, - if he began to trust in himself, he would be a fool, and soon he would have a grievous fall." (Spurgeon)

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**2** Uzziah built up Elat and restored it to Judah after King Amaziah had passed away.

**3** Uzziah was sixteen years old when he began to reign, and he reigned for fifty-two years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jecholiah, who was from Jerusalem. **4**

He did what the LORD approved, just as his father Amaziah had done. **5** He followed God during the lifetime of Zechariah, who taught him how to honor God. As long as he followed the LORD, God caused him to succeed.

**6** Uzziah attacked the Philistines and broke down the walls of Gath, Jabneh, and Ashdod. He built cities in the region of Ashdod and throughout Philistine territory. **7** God helped him in his campaigns against the Philistines, the Arabs living in Gur Baal, and the Meunites. **8** The Ammonites paid tribute to Uzziah and his fame reached the border of Egypt, for he grew in power.

**9** Uzziah built and fortified towers in Jerusalem at the Corner Gate, Valley Gate, and at the Angle. **10** He built towers in the desert and dug many cisterns, for he owned many herds in the lowlands and on the plain. He had workers in the fields and vineyards in the hills and in Carmel, for he loved agriculture.

**11** Uzziah had an army of skilled warriors trained for battle. They were organized by divisions according to the muster rolls made by Jeiel the scribe and Maaseiah the officer under the authority of Hananiah, a royal official. **12**

The total number of family leaders who led warriors was 2,600. **13** They commanded an army of 307,500 skilled and able warriors who were ready to defend the king against his enemies. **14** Uzziah supplied shields, spears, helmets,

breastplates, bows, and slingstones for the entire army. **15** In Jerusalem he made war machines carefully designed to shoot arrows and large stones from the towers and corners of the walls. He became very famous, for he received tremendous support and became powerful.

**16** But once he became powerful, his pride destroyed him. He disobeyed the LORD his God. He entered the LORD's temple to offer incense on the incense altar. **17**

Azariah the priest and eighty other brave priests of the LORD followed him in. **18** They confronted King Uzziah and said to him, "It is not proper for you, Uzziah, to offer incense to the LORD. That is the responsibility of the priests, the descendants of Aaron, who are consecrated to offer incense. Leave the sanctuary, for you have disobeyed and the LORD God will not honor you!" **19** Uzziah, who had an incense censer in his hand, became angry. While he was ranting and raving at the priests, a skin disease appeared on his forehead right there in front of the priests in the LORD's temple near the incense altar. **20** When Azariah the high priest and the other priests looked at him, there was a skin disease on his forehead. They hurried him out of there; even the king himself wanted to leave quickly because the LORD had afflicted him. **21** King Uzziah suffered from a skin disease until the day he died. He lived in separate quarters, afflicted by a skin disease and banned from the LORD's temple. His son Jotham was in charge of the palace and ruled over the people of the land.

**22** The rest of the events of Uzziah's reign, from start to finish, were recorded by the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz.

**23** Uzziah passed away and was buried near his ancestors in a cemetery belonging to the kings. (This was because he had a skin disease.) His son Jotham replaced him as king.

**1** Jotham was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned for sixteen years in Jerusalem. His mother was Jerusha the daughter of Zadok.

Guzik - 2 Chronicles 27:1-9

## **2 Chronicles 27 - Jotham's Godly Reign**

A. The good reign of King Jotham.

1. (1-2) An overview of the reign of Jotham.

Jotham *was* twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* Jerushah the daughter of Zadok. And he did *what was* right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Uzziah had done (although he did not enter the temple of the LORD). But still the people acted corruptly.

a. **And he did what was right in the sight of the LORD:**

Jotham was another king of Judah who was generally good. This stands in strong contrast to the evil done by the contemporary kings of Israel. Among the kings of Judah, there were good and godly kings.

b. **According to all that his father Uzziah had done:**

The pattern is seen in both the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, where the son reigns as his father had before him. While this is not concretely predetermined, certainly this is a principle that shows us great influence that a father has on a son.

i. Yet, **he did not enter the temple of**

**the LORD.** "He regarded his father's sin rather as a beacon to warn him away from

that rock on which Uzziah's life had been wrecked." (Spurgeon)

ii. "It is a great, mercy for us, when we have seen others *sin*, if we use their shipwrecks as beacons for ourselves. What fascination should there be in sin?" (Spurgeon)

c. **But still the people acted corruptly:** The word **still** is important, because it tells us that this corruption did not begin with the reign of Jotham, but continued from the days of his predecessor, Uzziah. Though he had a bad end, the personal character of Uzziah was generally godly. Yet it seems that he was, in general, more godly than the common people.

i. Payne says of Uzziah and the kings of

Israel that reigned in his days, "Below the surface prosperity that was enjoyed by both kingdoms at this time, the contemporary preaching of Hosea and Amos indicates the presence of serious moral and spiritual decay."

ii. "Though Isaiah, Hosea, Micah, and other holy prophets then living showed them their sin. To this day, people will not leave their old evil customs, though never so much preached down." (Trapp)

2. (3-6) The accomplishments of Jotham.

He built the Upper Gate of the house of the LORD, and he built extensively on the wall of Ophel. Moreover he built cities in the mountains of Judah, and in the forests he built fortresses and towers. He also fought with the king of the Ammonites and defeated them. And the people of Ammon gave him in that year one hundred talents of silver, ten thousand kors of wheat, and ten thousand of barley. The people of Ammon paid this to him in the second and third years also. So Jotham became mighty, because he prepared his ways before the LORD his God.

a. **He built the Upper Gate of the house of the LORD:**

This was always a positive sign in Judah. When kings and leaders were concerned about the **house of the LORD**, it reflected some measure of spiritual revival.

i. In particular, it seems that Jotham rebuilt the *link* between the temple and the palace.

"He wished free access from his own house to that of the Lord. He would strengthen the link between the two houses - keep his line of communication open (to use a military figure) with the source of his supplies of strength and wisdom. This is one of the secrets of his prosperity and power." (Knapp)

ii. His father Uzziah misunderstood the link between the royal house and the house God, demanding priestly authority (2Ch. 26:16-

21). Many kings before him wanted *no link* between the royal house and the house of God. Jotham understood that he was a king and not a priest, yet he wanted a good, open link between the palace and the temple.

**b. Moreover he built cities in the mountains of Judah, and in the forests he built fortresses and towers:** Jotham extended his concern to build Judah beyond

Jerusalem and the temple. This made his kingdom strong and able to subdue neighboring peoples such as the **Ammonites**.

i. "He also turned his attention to urban planning, construction cities in the highlands of Judah that, together with a system of towers and fortification in the wooded areas, could serve both economic and military purposes." (Patterson and Austel)

ii. "The tribute was substantial, something over three tons of *silver* and approximately *ten thousand* donkey loads of *barley*." (Selman)

**c. So Jotham became mighty, because he prepared his ways before the LORD his God**

. The building of this link between the palace and the temple was one of the chief ways that he prepared his way before the

LORD. "That high gate between the palace and the temple was better than a Chinese wall

around his kingdom. It is in communion with God that real prosperity and power is found." (Knapp)

i. "While there was no definite national reform during his reign, he seems to have gone quietly forward along true lines, and his strength is attributed to the fact that he ordered his ways before Jehovah his

God." (Morgan)

ii. "*Jotham must have been a man of prayer.* He could not have prepared his ways thus anywhere except at the mercy-seat. He must have been in the habit of taking his daily troubles to his God, and of seeking guidance from him in his daily difficulties, and of blessing him for his daily mercies. He must have been in constant communion with his God, or else he could not have ordered his ways aright before him." (Spurgeon) iii. "Jotham is the only one of all the Hebrew kings, from Saul down, against whom God has nothing to record. In this his character is in beautiful accord with his name, *Jehovah-perfect*." (Knapp) iv. "I do not remember ever meeting one who really walked with God who did not make orderliness one of the first principles of life. . . . They are the habits of the soul that walks before God, and which is accustomed to think of Him as seeing in secret, and considering all our ways." (Meyer)

3. (7-9) The summary of his reign.

Now the rest of the acts of Jotham, and all his wars and his ways, indeed they *are* written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah. He was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. So Jotham rested with his fathers, and they buried him in the City of David. Then Ahaz his son reigned in his place.

a. **All his wars and ways:** 2Ki. 15:37-38 tells us, *In those days the LORD began to send Rezin king of Syria and Pekah the son of Remaliah.*

Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the writer of 2 Kings tells us that it was the hand of the *LORD* that sent these foreign rulers who troubled Judah.

i. "During Jotham's reign, the combined forces of King Rezin of Syria and King Pekah of Israel began their invasion of Judah, but the full impact of these military assaults was not felt until Jotham's son became king." (Dilday)

ii. "The reference to 'all' Jotham's wars suggests that prior to the Ammonite campaign, for which as king he had sole responsibility, he may have served as field commander for the alliance that was conceived by his quarantined father, Uzziah." (Payne)

b. **So Jotham rested with his fathers:** After the stories of the three previous kings, each of whom started well but finished poorly, it is somewhat of a relief to read of a king who did not have such a disappointing end.

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**2** He did what the LORD approved, just as his father Uzziah had done. (He did not, however, have the audacity to enter the temple.) Yet the people were still sinning.

**3** He built the Upper Gate to the LORD's temple and did a lot of work on the wall in the area known as Ophel. **4** He built cities in the hill country of Judah and fortresses and towers in the forests. **5** He launched a military campaign against the king of the Ammonites and defeated them.

That year the Ammonites paid him 100 talents of silver, 10,000 kors of wheat, and 10,000 kors of barley. The Ammonites also paid this same amount of annual tribute the next two years.

**6** Jotham grew powerful because he was determined to please the LORD his God. **7** The rest of the events of Jotham's reign, including all his military campaigns and his accomplishments, are recorded in the scroll of the kings of Israel and Judah. **8** He was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned for sixteen years in Jerusalem. **9** Jotham passed away and was buried in the City of David. His son Ahaz replaced him as king.

**1** Ahaz was twenty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned for sixteen years in Jerusalem. He did not do what pleased the LORD, in contrast to his ancestor David.

Guzik - 2 Chronicles 28:1-27

## **2 Chronicles 28 - The Evil Reign of Ahaz**

A. The sin of Ahaz and the punishment of Ahaz.

1. (1-4) Ahaz rejects God and embraces idols.

Ahaz *was* twenty years old when he became king, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem; and he did not do *what was* right in the sight of the LORD, as his father David *had done*. For he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, and made molded images for the Baals. He burned incense in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, and burned his children in the fire, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel. And he sacrificed and burned incense on the high places, on the hills, and under every green tree.

a. **He did not do what was right in the**

**sight of the LORD:** This briefly describes the reign of perhaps the worst king of Judah.

Whereas many previous kings fell short in some area or another, of Ahaz it is simply said that **he did not do what was right in the sight of the LORD**.

b. **As his father David had done:** Ahaz had plenty of good examples, both immediately in his father Jotham and historically in his ancestor **David**. Ahaz rejected these godly examples and walked in his own way.

c. **He walked in the way of the kings of**

**Israel:** Ahaz not only rejected the godly heritage of David, he embraced the ungodly

ways of the kings of the northern kingdom of Israel. The southern kingdom of Judah had a mixture of godly and ungodly kings; the northern kingdom of Judah had *only* ungodly kings, and Ahaz followed *their* pattern.

i. "This is the first instance where Judah imitates Israel's apostasy." (Wiseman) ii. Mic. 7:2-7 is a good description of the depravity of the times of Ahaz and the reaction of the godly remnant to it.

d. **And burned his children in the fire:** This describes Ahaz's participation in the worship of Molech. The pagan god (or, *demon*, more accurately) Molech was worshipped by heating a metal statue representing the god until it was red hot, then placing a living infant on the outstretched hands of the statue, while beating drums drowned out the screams of the child until it burned to death.

i. In Lev. 20:1-5, God pronounced the death sentence against all who worshipped

Molech, saying: *I will set My face against that man, and will cut him off from his people, because he has given some of his descendants to Molech, to defile My sanctuary and profane My holy name* (Lev. 20:3).

ii. Sadly, even a man as great as Solomon at least sanctioned the worship of Molech and

built a temple to this idol (1Ki. 11:7). One of the great crimes of the northern tribes of

Israel was their worship of Molech, leading to the Assyrian captivity (2Ki. 17:17). King Manasseh of Judah gave his son to Molech (2Ki. 21:6). Up to the days of King Josiah of Judah, Molech worship continued, because

he destroyed a place of worship to that idol (2Ki. 23:10).

iii. "The 'Valley of (the son of) Hinnom'

descended eastward below the southern

edge of the city of Jerusalem; and it became noted as the scene of Judah's most revolting pagan practices (2Ch. 33:6).

It was later defiled by King Josiah and converted into a place of refuse for the city (2Ki. 23:10); thus the perpetual fires of 'Gehenna' became descriptive of hell itself (Mar.

9:43)." (Payne)

e. **According to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD had cast out from**

**before the children of Israel:** The Canaanite nations that occupied Canaan before the time of Joshua also practiced

this terrible form of human and child sacrifice. God would bring judgment upon Judah for their continued practice of these sins.

i. This reminds us that the war against the Canaanites in the Book of Joshua - as terrible and complete as it was - it was *not* a racial war. God's judgment did not come upon the Canaanites through the armies of Israel because of their *race*, but because of their *sin*. If Israel insisted in walking in the same sins, God would bring similar judgment upon them.

2. (5-8) A great slaughter and captivity of many from Judah. Therefore the LORD his God delivered him into the hand of the king of Syria. They defeated him, and carried away a great multitude of them as captives, and brought *them* to Damascus. Then he was also delivered into the hand of the king of Israel, who defeated him with a great slaughter.

For Pekah the son of Remaliah killed one hundred and twenty thousand in Judah in one day, all valiant men, because they had forsaken the LORD God of their fathers. Zichri, a mighty man of Ephraim, killed Maaseiah the king's son, Azrikam the officer over the house, and Elkanah *who was* second to the king. And the children of Israel carried away captive of their brethren two hundred thousand women, sons, and daughters; and they also took away much spoil from them, and brought the spoil to Samaria.

**a. Therefore the LORD his God delivered him into the hand of the king of Syria: 2Ki.**

16:5-6 tells us more about this confederation of Israel and Syria in this attack against Judah.

This was part of King Pekah of Israel's anti-Assyria policy. He thought that with Judah

defeated, Syria and Israel together could more effectively resist the resurgent power of the Assyrian Empire.

i. Isaiah 7 makes it clear that the goal of this attack was to dethrone Ahaz and set up a

Syrian king over Judah, a certain *son of Tabeal* (Isa. 7:6).

ii. **The LORD his God:** "God was *his* God, though not by covenant and grace, and special relation, which Ahaz had renounced, yet by his sovereign dominion over him; for God did not forfeit his right by Ahaz's denying of it." (Poole)

b. **Who defeated them with a great**

**slaughter:** The loss of 120,000 Judean soldiers and 200,000 civilian hostages in these battles with Israel and Syria meant that it was dark time for Judah, and it looked as if the dynasty of David would soon be extinguished, as so many dynasties in the northern kingdom of Israel had ended.

3. (9-15) The prophet's rebuke to Israel is heeded But a prophet of the LORD was there, whose name *was* Oded; and he went out before the army that came to Samaria, and said to them:

"Look, because the LORD God of your fathers was angry with Judah, He has delivered them into your hand; but you have killed them in a rage *that* reaches up to heaven. And now you propose to force the children of Judah and Jerusalem to be your male and female slaves; *but are* you not also guilty before the LORD your God? Now hear me, therefore, and return the captives, whom you have taken captive from your brethren, for the fierce wrath of the LORD *is* upon you." Then some of the heads of the children of Ephraim, Azariah the son of Johanan, Berechiah the son of Meshillemoth, Jehizkiah the son of Shallum, and Amasa the son of Hadlai, stood up against those who came from the war, and said to them, "You shall not bring the captives here, for we *already* have offended the LORD. You intend to add to our sins and to our guilt; for our guilt is great, and *there is* fierce wrath against Israel." So the armed men left the captives and the spoil before the leaders and all the assembly. Then the men who were designated by name rose up and took the captives, and from the spoil they clothed all who were naked among them, dressed them and gave them sandals, gave them food and drink, and anointed them; and they let all the

feeble ones ride on donkeys. So they brought them to their brethren at Jericho, the city of palm trees. Then they returned to Samaria.

a. **A prophet of the LORD was there,**

**whose name was Oded:** This brave prophet went with the 200,000 captives taken from the conquered southern kingdom to the northern kingdom of Israel, to call the leaders of Israel to conscience for this crime against their fellow tribes.

b. **You shall not bring captives here, for we *already* have offended the LORD:** Remarkably, the leaders of Israel responded to the message from Oded and recognized their own sin and guilt. They cared for the captives from the spoil of battle and sent them back to Judah.

i. "Here we have the picture of a good preacher. Oded teacheth, reproveth,

exhorteth, turneth himself into all shapes, of spirit and of speech, that he may work upon his hearers; and he had his desire." (Trapp) ii. "To this beautiful speech nothing can be added by the best comment; it is simple, humane, pious, and overwhelmingly

convincing: no wonder it produced the effect mentioned here. That there was much of

humanity in the heads of the children of

*Ephraim* who joined with the prophet on this occasion, 2Ch.

28:15 sufficiently

proves." (Clarke)

B. The decline and fall of King Ahaz.

1. (16-21) Ahaz puts his trust in the kings of Assyria instead of the LORD.

At the same time King Ahaz sent to the kings of Assyria to help him. For again the Edomites had come, attacked Judah, and carried away captives.

The Philistines also had invaded the cities of the lowland and of the South of Judah, and had

taken Beth Shemesh, Aijalon, Gederoth, Sochoh with its villages, Timnah with its villages, and Gimzo with its villages; and they dwelt there. For the LORD brought Judah low because of Ahaz king of Israel, for he had encouraged moral decline in Judah and had been continually unfaithful to the LORD. Also Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria came to him and distressed him, and did not assist him. For Ahaz took part *of the treasures* from the house of the LORD, from the house of the king, and from the leaders, and he gave *it* to the king of Assyria; but he did not help him.

a. **At the same time King Ahaz sent to the kings of Assyria to help him:** This was because, as 2 Kings 16 explains, the combined armies of Israel and Syria had not only overcome many cities of Judah, but were at the time laying siege against Jerusalem. 2Ki. 16:5

*says, they besieged Ahaz but could not overcome him.* To his shame in this time of crisis, Ahaz looked to **the kings of Assyria** instead of the LORD.

i. Before Ahaz did this, Isaiah offered him a sign for assurance of God's help in the struggle against the combined armies of Israel and Syria (Isa. 7:1-12). "This was a fair offer to a foul sinner" (Trapp), but Ahaz refused under the excuse of not wanting to test God, when instead he really wanted to trust in the king of Assyria.

ii. The prophecy of Isaiah 7 - including the announcement of the *Immanuel* sign - came from Isaiah to King Ahaz during this joint Israel-Syrian invasion (also apparently with the help of **the Edomites** and the

**Philistines**) Yet for the sake of David, God did not allow this disastrous attack on Judah to prevail. He would not allow this Satanic plot against the Messianic dynasty of David to succeed.

iii. The kings of Israel and Syria thought of themselves as burning torches, come to destroy Judah and the dynasty of David.

God said they were just like burnt-out smoking sticks, who would not ultimately do much damage (Isa. 7:4).

iv. Through Isaiah's message to Ahaz, he assured the wicked king - who did not really listen - "There should be a remnant left to return to the land; and the virgin should bear a son, so there should not fail a king upon the throne of David. The dynasty could never be destroyed, for of Immanuel's kingdom there shall be no end." (Knapp) v. "*The kings of Assyria*, i.e. the king; the plural number for the singular." (Poole) b. **For the LORD brought Judah low because of Ahaz king of Israel:** This was both because of the personal ungodliness of Ahaz and because of the poor example he was to others (**he had encouraged moral decline in Judah**).

i. An example of his personal decline was his appeal to the Assyrian King, to whom he said, *I am your servant and your son. Come up and save me* (2Ki. 16:7). Ahaz surrendered to one enemy in order to defeat another. He refused to trust in the God of Israel and instead submitted himself and his kingdom to an enemy of Israel.

ii. "The address 'I am your servant and your son' clearly places Ahaz as the petitioning vassal and shows he was trusting in Assyria rather than in the LORD, against the advice of Isaiah (Isa. 7:10-16; cf. Exo. 23:22)." (Wiseman)

c. **For Ahaz took part of the treasures from the house of the LORD . . . but he did not help him:** Essentially, Ahaz made Judah a subject kingdom to Assyria. Ahaz now took his orders from the Assyrian king, sacrificing the independence of the Kingdom of Judah. Worse yet, **he did not help him**. It was useless.

i. We can only wonder what blessing might have come if Ahaz would have surrendered and sacrificed to the LORD with the same

energy and whole heart that he surrendered to the Assyrian king.

ii. "How different was his great ancestor David! 'In my distress,' he says, 'I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God' (Psa.

18:6). Even his wicked grandson Manasseh sought the Lord his God 'when he was in affliction.' But Ahaz seemed determined to fill up the measure of his sins." (Knapp) 2. (22-27) The apostasy and end of King Ahaz.

Now in the time of his distress King Ahaz became increasingly unfaithful to the LORD. This *is that* King Ahaz. For he sacrificed to the gods of Damascus which had defeated him, saying, "Because the gods of the kings of Syria help them, I will sacrifice to them that they may help me." But they were the ruin of him and of all Israel. So Ahaz gathered the articles of the house of God, cut in pieces the articles of the house of God, shut up the doors of the house of the LORD, and made for himself altars in every corner of Jerusalem. And in every single city of Judah he made high places to burn incense to other gods, and provoked to anger the LORD God of his fathers. Now the rest of his acts and all his ways, from first to last, indeed they *are* written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel. So Ahaz rested with his fathers, and they buried him in the city, in Jerusalem; but they did not bring him into the tombs of the kings of Israel. Then Hezekiah his son reigned in his place.

a. **In the time of his distress King Ahaz became increasingly unfaithful to the**

**LORD:** Times of trial and distress do not necessarily drive people closer to God.

Sometimes people allow such distresses to drive them *away* from God. Ahaz was notable among that type, so much so that the Chronicler noted, **That is that King Ahaz.**

i. "These hammers of the Most High did but beat upon cold iron." (Trapp)

ii. "Ahaz also 'behaved without restraint' and was *most unfaithful*. The former expression really means to favour licence rather than true liberty, while the latter is a typical term in Chronicles for failing to give God his due."

(Selman)

iii. "The evil of his character is supremely demonstrated in that calamities seemed not

to have the effect, as they so often had among his predecessors, of rousing him to consciousness of his sin." (Morgan)

iv. **This is that King Ahaz:** "A black mark is put against his name, to show how greatly guilty he was. Those who rebel against divine checks, and will not be held in by the providence of God, are to be written down in capital letters as great sinners. They sin with emphasis who sin against the chastising rod." (Spurgeon)

**b. For he sacrificed to the gods of**

**Damascus which defeated him:** 2 Kings 16

tells us that this happened after a visit that Ahaz made to Damascus. He returned from the visit and made a new altar after the pattern of what he saw in Damascus and he took their forms, their style, and their gods. Sadly, he even received the help of Urijah the priest.

i. 2 Kings 16 also tells us that Ahaz served as a priest at the altar of his own design.

Since he created his own place of worship, it also made sense that he would disregard

God's command that a king must not serve as a priest (Num. 18:7).

ii. Ahaz's grandfather Azariah (Uzziah) dared to enter the temple and serve God as a

priest (2 Chronicles 26). Yet at least Azariah *falsely* worshipped the *true God*. Ahaz *falsely* worshipped a *false god* of his own creation.

"Uzziah for so doing was smitten with

leprosy; but Ahaz of a far worse disease, an incurable hardness of heart." (Trapp)

c. **Cut in pieces the articles of the house of God, shut up the doors of the house of the LORD:** Ahaz could not bring in his pagan, corrupt innovations without *also* removing what had stood before at the temple. This was an ungodly exchange, taking away the good and putting in the bad. Collectively, all these things served to *discourage* the worship of the true God at the temple of God.

i. "He caused the Divine worship to be totally suspended; and they continued shut till the beginning of the reign of Hezekiah, one of whose first acts was to reopen them, and thus to restore the Divine worship." (Clarke) ii. "Ahaz's appropriation of the panels and bases from the sacred furniture does not seem to be for the purpose of sending a further gift to Tiglath-pileser but rather for deemphasizing their importance in the

worship services. Perhaps he planned to reuse them in some other decorative way. At any rate death overtook him before his attention could be turned to them. They are mentioned among the several items that were carried away in the later Babylonian despoiling of Jerusalem (25:13-14; Jer. 27:19-20; 52:17-23)." (Patterson and Austel)

iii. We remember that *all this took place at the temple Solomon built unto the LORD.*

The mere *location* did not make it true worship. Sometimes idols are worshipped at a house that was once dedicated to the true God.

d. **And in every single city of Judah he made high places to burn incense to other gods:** During these changes, Ahaz shut down the operation of the temple and established small pagan altars all around Judah.

i. "It would seem as though the light of truth were absolutely extinguished. It was not so, however, for it is likely that throughout the whole reigns of Jotham and Ahaz, Isaiah was uttering his message, and that during the reign of Ahaz Micah also was delivering the word of God." (Morgan)

**e. Now the rest of his acts and all his**

**ways:** So ended the reign of perhaps the worst king of Judah. Micah - who prophesied during the reign of Ahaz - describes the man who works to *successfully do evil with both hands* (Mic. 7:3). The idea is that the man pursues evil with all his effort, *with both hands*. He may very well have had King Ahaz in mind.

i. "He died a natural death, though he was so detestable a miscreant. God putteth off the punishment of many wicked wretches till the other world." (Trapp)

ii. "Ahaz was evil by choice, persistent in evil in spite of calamity, blasphemously rebellious notwithstanding the direct warnings of the prophet of God. This attitude of the king made the darkness all the denser." (Morgan)

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**2** He followed in the footsteps of the kings of Israel; he also made images of the Baals. **3** He offered sacrifices in the Valley of Ben-Hinnom and passed his sons through the fire, a horrible sin practiced by the nations whom the LORD drove out before the Israelites. **4** He offered sacrifices and burned incense on the high places, on the hills, and under every green tree. **5** The LORD his God handed him over to the king of Syria. The Syrians defeated him and deported many captives to Damascus. He was also handed over to the king of Israel, who thoroughly defeated him. **6** In one day King Pekah son of Remaliah of Israel killed 120,000 warriors in

Judah, because they had abandoned the LORD God of their ancestors. **7** Zikri, an Ephraimite warrior, killed the king's son Maaseiah, Azrikam, the supervisor of the palace, and Elkanah, the king's second-in-command. **8** The Israelites seized from their brothers 200,000 wives, sons, and daughters. They also carried off a huge amount of plunder and took it back to Samaria.

**9** Oded, a prophet of the LORD, was there. He went to meet the army as they arrived in Samaria and said to them: "Look, because the LORD God of your ancestors was angry with Judah he handed them over to you. You have killed them so mercilessly that God has taken notice.

**10** And now you are planning to enslave the people of Judah and Jerusalem. Yet are you not also guilty before the LORD your God? **11** Now listen to me! Send back those you have seized from your brothers, for the LORD is very angry at you!" **12** So some of the Ephraimite family leaders, Azariah son of Jehochanan, Berechiah son of Meshillemoth, Jechizkiah son of Shallum, and Amasa son of Hadlai confronted those returning from the battle. **13**

They said to them, "Don't bring those captives here! Are you planning on making us even more sinful and guilty before the LORD? Our guilt is already great and the LORD

is very angry at Israel." **14** So the soldiers released the captives and the plunder before the officials and the entire assembly. **15** Men were assigned to take the prisoners and find clothes among the plunder for those who were naked.

So they clothed them, supplied them with sandals, gave them food and drink, and provided them with oil to rub on their skin. They put the ones who couldn't walk on donkeys. They brought them back to their brothers at Jericho, the city of the date palm trees, and then returned to Samaria.

**16** At that time King Ahaz asked the king of Assyria for help.

**17** The Edomites had again invaded and defeated Judah and carried off captives. **18** The Philistines had raided the cities of Judah in the lowlands and the Negev.

They captured and settled in Beth Shemesh, Aijalon, Gederath, Soco and its surrounding villages, Timnah and its surrounding villages, and Gimzo and its surrounding villages. **19** The LORD humiliated Judah because of King Ahaz of Israel, for he encouraged Judah to sin and was very unfaithful to the LORD. **20** King Tiglath-pileser of Assyria came, but he gave him more trouble than support.

**21** Ahaz gathered riches from the LORD's temple, the royal palace, and the officials and gave them to the king of Assyria, but that did not help.

**22** During his time of trouble King Ahaz was even more unfaithful to the LORD. **23** He offered sacrifices to the gods of Damascus whom he thought had defeated him. He reasoned, "Since the gods of the kings of Damascus helped them, I will sacrifice to them so they will help me."

But they caused him and all Israel to stumble. **24** Ahaz gathered the items in God's temple and removed them. He shut the doors of the LORD's temple and erected altars on every street corner in Jerusalem. **25** In every city throughout Judah he set up high places to offer sacrifices to other gods. He angered the LORD God of his ancestors.

**26** The rest of the events of Ahaz's reign, including his accomplishments from start to finish, are recorded in the Scroll of the Kings of Judah and Israel. **27** Ahaz passed away and was buried in the City of David; they did not bring him to the tombs of the kings of Israel. His son Hezekiah replaced him as king.

**1** Hezekiah was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother was Abijah, the daughter of Zechariah.

Guzik - 2 Chronicles 29:1-36

***2 Chronicles 29 - Hezekiah and the Cleansing of***

# the Temple

A. The cleansing of the temple.

1. (1-2) The general assessment of his reign.

Hezekiah became king *when he was* twenty-five years old, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* Abijah the daughter of Zechariah. And he did *what was* right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father David had done.

a. **Hezekiah became king when he was**

**twenty-five years old:** Hezekiah came to the throne of Judah at the very end of the Kingdom of Israel. Three years after the start of his reign the Assyrian armies set siege to Samaria, and three years after that the northern kingdom was conquered.

i. The sad fate of the northern kingdom was a valuable lesson to Hezekiah. He saw first hand what happened when the people of God rejected their God and His word, and worshipped other gods.

b. **He reigned twenty-nine years in**

**Jerusalem:** Hezekiah was one of the better kings of Judah, and thus had a long and mostly blessed reign. No doubt his mother **Abijah** was a godly and important influence on his life.

i. "His mother was Abijah, the daughter of Zechariah, probably the person mentioned by the Prophet Isaiah (Isa. 8:2) as a 'faithful witness.' This possible friendship of his mother for the prophet, combined with the certainty that up to this time he had been under the influence of Isaiah's ministry, may account for Hezekiah's action on coming to the throne." (Morgan)

c. **He did what was right in the sight of the LORD:**

Hezekiah was one of Judah's most zealous reformers, even prohibiting worship on *the high places* (2Ki. 18:4). These

were popular altars for sacrifice set up as the worshipper desired, not according to God's direction.

i. "God was never happy about this practice, but none of the other good kings ever found the courage to forbid it. Hezekiah did." (Dilday)

ii. 2Ki. 18:5 makes this remarkable statement about Hezekiah: *He trusted in the LORD God of Israel, so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor who were before him. For he held fast to the LORD; he did not depart from following Him, but kept His commandments, which the LORD had commanded Moses.*

2. (3-11) Hezekiah exhorts the cleansing and restoration the temple.

In the first year of his reign, in the first month, he opened the doors of the house of the LORD

and repaired them. Then he brought in the priests and the Levites, and gathered them in the East Square, and said to them: "Hear me, Levites! Now sanctify yourselves, sanctify the house of the LORD God of your fathers, and carry out the rubbish from the holy *place*. For our fathers have trespassed and done evil in the eyes of the LORD our God; they have forsaken Him, have turned their faces away from the dwelling place of the LORD, and turned *their backs on Him*. They have also shut up the doors of the vestibule, put out the lamps, and have not burned incense or offered burnt offerings in the holy *place* to the God of Israel. Therefore the wrath of the LORD fell upon Judah and Jerusalem, and He has given them up to trouble, to desolation, and to jeering, as you see with your eyes. For indeed, because of this our fathers have fallen by the sword; and our sons, our daughters, and our wives *are* in captivity. Now *it is* in my heart to make a covenant with the LORD God of Israel, that His fierce wrath may turn away from us. My sons, do not be negligent now, for the LORD has chosen

you to stand before Him, to serve Him, and that you should minister to Him and burn incense."

a. **Sanctify yourselves, sanctify the house of the LORD God of your fathers, and carry out the rubbish from the holy place:** Tragically, the condition of both the Levites and the temple was so bad that they seemed incapable of reforming themselves without this push from King Hezekiah.

b. **Have turned their faces away . . . and turned their backs on Him:** They had failed because they gave God their **back** instead of their **face**. One might say that in every opportunity to encounter God, we have the choice to turn either our **back** or our **face** to God.

i. Poole suggests that the idea of turning the back to God could also be understood literally, because according to 2 Kings 16, in the days of Ahaz the altar was moved and its replacement was directed to the east, in the manner of pagan altars instead of toward the west as God commanded. The

idea was therefore that under this dangerous innovation, one had to literally turn his back to the temple and the ark of God to stand before the altar.

c. **They have also shut up the doors of the vestibule, put out the lamps, and have not burned incense or offered burnt offerings:** This happened in the days of Ahaz, the father of Hezekiah (2Ch. 28:24). Hezekiah knew that it was time to open up the temple again, both to clean it out and so that it could operate as intended.

d. **Therefore the wrath of the LORD fell upon Judah and Jerusalem:** In a remarkable way, Hezekiah recognized that the calamities that had come to Judah came *because of their disobedience*. It takes a wise and godly person to admit this, and to act appropriately.

i. "He made no attempt to blame on God the calamities which had overtaken the nation." (Morgan)

**e. My sons, do not be negligent now, for the LORD has chosen you to stand before Him, to serve Him:**

This call to courage from Hezekiah to the priests and Levites was focused on their sense of *calling* (**the LORD has chosen you**). Getting back to a focus upon their calling and their central purpose (to serve and honor God) was essential, and this exhortation demonstrates that they had lost this focus.

i. Hezekiah set the example in this devoted service to God, in that he even destroyed a notable artifact from the Exodus - the bronze serpent of Moses known as *Nehushtan* - when it became an idol (2Ki. 18:4).

**3. (12-19) Cleansing the temple.**

Then these Levites arose: Mahath the son of Amasai and Joel the son of Azariah, of the sons of the Kohathites; of the sons of Merari, Kish the son of Abdi and Azariah the son of Jehallelel; of the Gershonites, Joah the son of Zimmah and Eden the son of Joah; of the sons of Elizaphan, Shimri and Jeiel; of the sons of Asaph, Zechariah and Mattaniah; of the sons of Heman, Jehiel and Shimei; and of the sons of Jeduthun, Shemaiah and Uzziel. And they gathered their brethren, sanctified themselves, and went according to the commandment of the king, at the words of the LORD, to cleanse the house of the LORD. Then the priests went into the inner part of the house of the LORD to cleanse *it*, and brought out all the debris that they found in the temple of the LORD

to the court of the house of the LORD. And the Levites took *it* out and carried *it* to the Brook Kidron. Now they began to sanctify on the first *day* of the first month, and on the eighth day of the month they came to the vestibule of the LORD. Then they sanctified the house of the LORD in eight days, and on the sixteenth day of the first month they finished. Then they went in to King Hezekiah and said, "We have cleansed all the house of the LORD, the altar of burnt

offerings with all its articles, and the table of the showbread with all its articles. Moreover all the articles which King Ahaz in his reign had cast aside in his transgression we have prepared and sanctified; and there they *are*, before the altar of the LORD."

a. **Then the Levites arose:** These were men who *had* been complicit in the neglect and disgrace of the temple. Yet the Chronicler rightly noted these men by name, because when they were exhorted by King Hezekiah to do what is right in cleansing and restoring the temple, *they did it*.

b. **On the sixteenth day of the first month they finished:** This relates the staggering extent of the prior damage to the temple, in that it took 16 days to simply carry out the rubbish that had accumulated in the temple, including even **the inner part of the house of the LORD**.

c. **All the articles which King Ahaz in his reign had cast aside in his transgression we have prepared and sanctified; and there they are:** After the first step of removing the problem, now they could put back what had been taken out during the reign of Ahaz (2Ch. 28:24 and 2Ki. 16:17-18).

B. The restoration of worship.

1. (20-27) Sacrifice and worship is organized again.

Then King Hezekiah rose early, gathered the rulers of the city, and went up to the house of the LORD. And they brought seven bulls, seven rams, seven lambs, and seven male goats for a sin offering for the kingdom, for the sanctuary, and for Judah. Then he commanded the priests, the sons of Aaron, to offer *them* on the altar of the LORD. So they killed the bulls, and the priests received the blood and sprinkled *it* on the altar.

Likewise they killed the rams and sprinkled the blood on the altar. They also killed the lambs and sprinkled the blood on the altar. Then they brought out the male goats *for* the sin offering before the king and the assembly, and they laid

their hands on them. And the priests killed them; and they presented their blood on the altar as a sin offering to make an atonement for all Israel, for the king commanded *that* the burnt offering and the sin offering *be made* for all Israel. And he stationed the Levites in the house of the LORD with cymbals, with stringed instruments, and with harps, according to the commandment of David, of Gad the king's seer, and of Nathan the prophet; for thus *was* the commandment of the LORD by his prophets. The Levites stood with the instruments of David, and the priests with the trumpets. Then Hezekiah commanded *them* to offer the burnt offering on the altar. And when the burnt offering began, the song of the LORD *also* began, with the trumpets and with the instruments of David king of Israel.

**a. Then he commanded the priests, the sons of Aaron, to offer them on the altar of the LORD:** In his bold restoration of the service of the temple, Hezekiah was not so foolish as to overstep the Biblical and traditional commands and to offer these sacrifices himself. His great-grandfather Uzziah did this to his own judgment (2Ch. 26:16-23).

i. "The whole enterprise is characterized by a concern to do everything as God required, especially as the king's command was

regarded as 'the words of the LORD' (2Ch. 29:15)." (Selman)

ii. "For the assembly to lay their hands on the goats of the sin offering was to designate these as substitutes for their own lives and to transfer their sins to the animal victims (Num. 27:18-21). The goats thus served as types of Christ's death in the

sinner's stead (2Co. 5:21)." (Payne)

iii. The diligence of Hezekiah was evident in that he **rose early** to do these things. "His zeal for God's glory made his obedience prompt and present, ready and speedy. He

could not rest until he had reformed." (Trapp)

iv. It was also shown if offering *more* than the law commanded. "This was more than the law required; see Leviticus 4:13, etc. It ordered *one calf* or *ox* for the sins of the *people*, and *one he-goat* for the sins of the *prince*; but Hezekiah here offers many more." (Clarke) b. **And when the burnt offering began, the song of the LORD also began:**

In his arrangement of this restoration of temple service, Hezekiah was careful to include both *offering* and *worship*. Each honored God in important ways.

i. "The Hebrew that lies behind the phrase 'singing to the LORD' is literally 'the song of the LORD' (NASB), which suggests a specific writing, i.e., perhaps including the canonical Psalms that were then available for use in worship." (Payne)

ii. Hezekiah was wise in making worship such a priority. "Every human being's first priority should be to acknowledge God's worth. That, for example, is how the ten

commandments begin (Exo. 20:3-6), it is the reason for Jesus' obedient death on the cross, and it is the chief characteristic of the community in heaven (Rev. 4:1-5:14; 22:1-9)." (Selman) 2. (28-30) The assembly of Judah joins in the worship and recognition of sacrificial offerings.

So all the assembly worshiped, the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded; all *this continued* until the burnt offering was finished. And when they had finished offering, the king and all who were present with him bowed and worshiped.

Moreover King Hezekiah and the leaders commanded the Levites to sing praise to the LORD with the words of David and of Asaph the seer. So they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed their heads and worshiped.

a. **So all the assembly worshipped, the singers sang, and the trumpeters**

**sounded:** Each person played their part in this large, communal honoring of God.

i. "This chapter contains a parable of the cleansing of the heart, meant to be a temple for God; but the doors of prayer are unopened, the lamps of testimony unlit, the burnt-offerings of self-sacrifice neglected." (Meyer)

ii. "You tell me that you cannot sing the Lord's song; then I know you have gone into the strange land of backsliding. You acknowledge that for some time now you have taken no delight in god or his service; then I am sure that the temple is badly in need of renovation." (Meyer)

iii. "The music of your life is still, because you are out of accord with the will of God; but when by surrender and consecration there is unison, your heart will be filled with songs without words, and love like an ocean in the fullness of her strength." (Meyer)

iv. The description of instruments in this passage is compelling evidence that they should be used today in worshipping God, but not all are convinced of this. "Away with such portentous baubles from the worship of that infinite Spirit who requires his followers to worship him *in spirit and in truth*, for to no such worship are those instruments friendly." (Clarke)

**b. King Hezekiah and the leaders**

**commanded the Levites to sing praise to the LORD with the words of David and of**

**Asaph the seer:** They worshipped God with the best words they could find - the words of the great psalms of praise written by David and others.

3. (31-36) Thank and fellowship offerings and the resulting joy.

Then Hezekiah answered and said, "Now *that* you have consecrated yourselves to the LORD, come near, and bring sacrifices and thank offerings into the house of the LORD." So the assembly brought in sacrifices and thank offerings, and as many as were of a willing heart *brought* burnt offerings.

And the number of the burnt offerings which the assembly brought was seventy bulls, one hundred rams, *and* two hundred lambs; all these *were* for a burnt offering to the LORD. The consecrated things *were* six hundred bulls and three thousand sheep. But the priests were too few, so that they could not skin all the burnt offerings; therefore their brethren the Levites helped them until the work was ended and until the *other* priests had sanctified themselves, for the Levites were more diligent in sanctifying themselves than the priests. Also the burnt offerings *were* in abundance, with the fat of the peace offerings and *with* the drink offerings for *every* burnt offering. So the service of the house of the LORD was set in order. Then Hezekiah and all the people rejoiced that God had prepared the people, since the events took place so suddenly.

a. **Now that you have consecrated yourselves to the LORD, come near, and bring sacrifices and thank offerings into the house of the LORD:** Once they had properly sacrificed and cleansed the temple and their own hearts before the LORD, *now* the **assembly** was invited to come and bring their personal offerings. One of the great purposes of the temple - as a place for the personal sacrifice and worship of the believer - was now restored.

i. "Sacrifices and offerings are only acceptable when those offering them are themselves consecrated to Jehovah." (Morgan)

ii. "Sacrifice for sin in both the Old Testament and the New is the springboard for the sacrifice of praise (Col. 3:15; Heb. 13:15-16) and for the fellowship or communion meal (1Co. 11:23-26)." (Selman)

b. **The priests were too few, so that they could not skin all the burnt offerings:** The pent-up desire of the people to sacrifice and honor God through sacrifices was so

great that when they were given the opportunity the priests were overwhelmed.

i. Wisely, **their brethren the Levites helped them until the work was ended.**

This was a good example of temporarily suspending a commandment out of godly necessity.

ii. It was also fitting on this occasion because **the Levites were more diligent**

# in their sanctifying themselves than

**the priests.** "For the truest faith is often found among the humble; and throughout history 'professional' religious leaders have too often been among those least willing to submit to Christ and to the Word." (Payne) c. **Hezekiah and all the people rejoiced that God had prepared the people:** The remarkable response of the assembly was proof that **God had prepared the people.** There could never be such a response unless God was at work among His people, and this was evidence of such a work.

i. "It was, as a very great, so a sudden change, that the people, who but the other day were so ready to comply with wicked Ahaz in his idolatrous and impious prescriptions, were now so free and forward in God's service; whereby it plainly appeared to be the work of the Almighty God changing their hearts by his Holy Spirit." (Poole) ii. "Two consequences followed from these offerings. The first was to acknowledge that only God had made it all possible (2Ch. 29:36; cf. 1Co. 12:3; Eph. 2:18). The second was that everyone *rejoiced* (2Ch. 29:36), in complete contrast with the situation with which they had begun." (Selman)

© 2006 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** He did what the LORD approved, just as his ancestor David had done.

**3** In the first month of the first year of his reign, he opened the doors of the LORD's temple and repaired them. **4** He brought in the priests and Levites and assembled them in the square on the east side. **5** He said to them: "Listen to me, you Levites! Now consecrate yourselves, so you can consecrate the temple of the LORD

God of your ancestors! Remove from the sanctuary what is ceremonially unclean! **6** For our fathers were unfaithful; they did what is evil in the sight of the LORD our God and abandoned him! They turned away from the LORD's dwelling place and rejected him. **7** They closed the doors of the temple porch and put out the lamps; they did not offer incense or burnt sacrifices in the sanctuary of the God of Israel. **8** The LORD was angry at Judah and Jerusalem and made them an appalling object of horror at which people hiss out their scorn, as you can see with your own eyes. **9** Look, our fathers died violently and our sons, daughters, and wives were carried off because of this. **10** Now I intend to make a covenant with the LORD

God of Israel, so that he may relent from his raging anger.

**11** My sons, do not be negligent now, for the LORD has chosen you to serve in his presence and offer sacrifices."

**12** The following Levites prepared to carry out the king's orders:

From the Kohathites: Mahath son of Amasai and Joel son of Azariah;

from the Merarites: Kish son of Abdi and Azariah son of Jehallelel;

from the Gershonites: Joah son of Zimmah and Eden son of Joah;

**13** from the descendants of Elizaphan: Shimri and Jeiel;

from the descendants of Asaph: Zechariah and Mattaniah;

**14** from the descendants of Heman: Jehiel and Shimei; from the descendants of Jeduthun: Shemaiah and Uzziel.

**15** They assembled their brothers and consecrated themselves. Then they went in to purify the LORD's temple, just as the king had ordered, in accordance with the word of the LORD. **16** The priests then entered the LORD's temple to purify it; they brought out to the courtyard of the LORD's temple every ceremonially unclean thing they discovered inside. The Levites took them out to the Kidron Valley. **17** On the first day of the first month they began consecrating; by

the eighth day of the month they reached the porch of the LORD's temple.

For eight more days they consecrated the LORD's temple.

On the sixteenth day of the first month they were finished.

**18** They went to King Hezekiah and said: "We have purified the entire temple of the LORD, including the altar of burnt sacrifice and all its equipment, and the table for the Bread of the Presence and all its equipment. **19** We have prepared and consecrated all the items that King Ahaz removed during his reign when he acted unfaithfully.

They are in front of the altar of the LORD."

**20** Early the next morning King Hezekiah assembled the city officials and went up to the LORD's temple. **21** They brought seven bulls, seven rams, seven lambs, and seven goats as a sin offering for the kingdom, the sanctuary, and Judah. The king told the priests, the descendants of Aaron, to offer burnt sacrifices on the altar of the LORD.

**22** They slaughtered the bulls, and the priests took the blood and splashed it on the altar. Then they slaughtered the rams and splashed the blood on the altar; next they slaughtered the lambs and splashed the blood on the altar.

**23** Finally they brought the goats for the sin offering before the king and the assembly, and they placed their hands on them. **24** Then the priests slaughtered them.

They offered their blood as a sin offering on the altar to make atonement for all Israel, because the king had decreed that the burnt sacrifice and sin offering were for all Israel.

**25** King Hezekiah stationed the Levites in the LORD's temple with cymbals and stringed instruments, just as David, Gad the king's prophet, and Nathan the prophet had ordered. (The LORD had actually given these orders through his prophets.) **26** The Levites had David's musical instruments and the priests had trumpets. **27** Hezekiah ordered the burnt sacrifice to be offered on the altar. As they began to offer the sacrifice, they also began to sing to the LORD, accompanied by the trumpets and the musical

instruments of King David of Israel. **28** The entire assembly worshiped, as the singers sang and the trumpeters played. They continued until the burnt sacrifice was completed.

**29** When the sacrifices were completed, the king and all who were with him bowed down and worshiped. **30** King Hezekiah and the officials told the Levites to praise the LORD, using the psalms of David and Asaph the prophet.

So they joyfully offered praise and bowed down and worshiped. **31** Hezekiah said, "Now you have consecrated yourselves to the LORD. Come and bring sacrifices and thank offerings to the LORD's temple." So the assembly brought sacrifices and thank offerings, and whoever desired to do so brought burnt sacrifices.

**32** The assembly brought a total of 70 bulls, 100 rams, and 200 lambs as burnt sacrifices to the LORD, **33** and 600 bulls and 3,000 sheep were consecrated. **34** But there were not enough priests to skin all the animals, so their brothers, the Levites, helped them until the work was finished and the priests could consecrate themselves. (The Levites had been more conscientious about consecrating themselves than the priests.) **35** There was a large number of burnt sacrifices, as well as fat from the peace offerings and drink offerings that accompanied the burnt sacrifices. So the service of the LORD's temple was reinstituted. **36** Hezekiah and all the people were happy about what God had done for them, for it had been done quickly.

**1** Hezekiah sent messages throughout Israel and Judah; he even wrote letters to Ephraim and Manasseh, summoning them to come to the LORD's temple in Jerusalem and observe a Passover celebration for the LORD God of Israel.

Guzik - 2 Chronicles 30:1-27

## ***2 Chronicles 30 - Hezekiah's Passover***

A. The letter of invitation.

1. (1-5) The tribes of Israel are invited to celebrate the Passover.

And Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah, and also wrote letters to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should come to the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, to keep the Passover to the LORD God of Israel. For the king and his leaders and all the assembly in Jerusalem had agreed to keep the Passover in the second month. For they could not keep it at the regular time, because a sufficient number of priests had not consecrated themselves, nor had the people gathered together at Jerusalem. And the matter pleased the king and all the assembly. So they resolved to make a proclamation throughout all Israel, from Beersheba to Dan, that they should come to keep the Passover to the LORD God of Israel at Jerusalem, since they had not done *it* for a long *time* in the *prescribed* manner.

a. **Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah:** The timing of this invitation is somewhat hard to precisely determine. It seems to have happened when Israel was defeated and prostrate under Assyria, yet perhaps before the kingdom as a whole had been depopulated through exile.

Therefore this invitation actually went out to the remnant that had, up to this point, escaped exile (2Ch. 30:6).

i. "In all probability, this Passover was observed before the final passing of the

northern kingdom into captivity." (Morgan) ii. "Any such compliance had been prohibited during the two centuries that had followed Jeroboam's division of the Solomonic empire (2Ch. 30:5, 26; 1Ki. 12:27-28). But now King Hoshea's capital in Samaria was subject to Assyrian siege (2Ch. 30:6; 2Ki. 17:5), and

the northern ruler was powerless to interfere." (Payne)

b. **To keep the Passover:** This great feast remembered the great and glorious deliverance of God on Israel's behalf in the days of the Exodus (Exodus 12). It was a deliberate, emblematic reminder of the central act of redemption in the Old Testament (the

deliverance from slavery in Egypt).

i. Communion is likewise an emblematic reminder of the central act of redemption of the New Testament (and the Bible as a whole). The long neglect of Passover among the tribes of Israel would be like a church that had not celebrated the Lord's Table in a long, long time.

ii. "Jesus is the ultimate Passover lamb, who by his own body and blood established a new covenant ( *cf.* Luk. 22:14-20). Just as Hezekiah's congregation were cleansed and healed, Christians are made clean by their

Passover sacrifice, except that Jesus' sacrifice is the ultimate and unrepeatable Passover." (Selman)

c. **Had agreed to keep the Passover in the second month:** Normally, Passover was kept in the first month (Num. 9:1-5). However, there were special circumstances under which Passover could be kept in the **second month** (Num. 9:5-14). Because **they could not keep it at the regular time**, here under Hezekiah they kept it in the **second month**.

i. "Hezekiah therefore, and his counsellors, thought that they might extend that to the *people at large*, because of the delay necessarily occasioned by the cleansing of the temple, which was granted to *individuals* in such cases as the above, and the result showed that they had not mistaken the mind

of the Lord upon the subject." (Clarke) d. **Since they had not done it for a long time:** Even though Passover was one of the three feasts that deserved special emphasis (Exo. 23:14-17), it had not been celebrated **for a long time**. Hezekiah was dedicated to righting this wrong.

2. (6-9) The letter to the tribes.

Then the runners went throughout all Israel and Judah with the letters from the king and his leaders, and spoke

according to the command of the king: "Children of Israel, return to the LORD

God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel; then He will return to the remnant of you who have escaped from the hand of the kings of Assyria. And do not be like your fathers and your brethren, who trespassed against the LORD God of their fathers, so that He gave them up to desolation, as you see. Now do not be stiff-necked, as your fathers *were*, *but* yield yourselves to the LORD; and enter His sanctuary, which He has sanctified forever, and serve the LORD your God, that the fierceness of His wrath may turn away from you.

For if you return to the LORD, your brethren and your children *will be treated* with compassion by those who lead them captive, so that they may come back to this land; for the LORD your God *is* gracious and merciful, and will not turn *His* face from you if you return to Him."

**a. Children of Israel, return to the LORD**

**God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel:** The northern kingdom of Israel had fallen and all that remained after exile to the Assyrians was **the remnant of you who have escaped**. Yet Hezekiah still believed in the concept of the **Children of Israel**, those of the tribes of Israel descended from the great patriarchs.

i. In the history of the divided kingdoms there were some attempts to reunify by force, but these came to nothing. "In comparison with previous failures, this incident shows that the only really effective approach to unity has to be based on the

principle of faithful worship." (Selman) ii. "The good of our brethren in other kingdoms must also be minded." (Trapp)

**b. Do not be stiff-necked, as your fathers were:** This was especially relevant as the letter went to the remnant of the northern kingdom.

Generally speaking, they had neglected the Jerusalem Passover for a long time.

i. "Hezekiah knew that the poor remnant of Israel were in great affliction: he therefore presseth them to repentance, whereby men return to God, as by sin they run from him. .

. . Hezekiah though it was good striking while the iron was hot." (Trapp)

c. **For if you return to the LORD:** The letter of invitation promised two things if the remnant of Israel would **return to the LORD** and obediently celebrate this Passover in Jerusalem.

First, under God's blessing it would go well with those already taken **captive** by the Assyrians.

Second, God would restore the northern

kingdom and allow them to **come back to this land**.

i.. These promises were based on an eternal principle of God's character: that He **will not turn His face from you if you return to Him**. God promises to draw near to those who draw near to Him.

3. (10-12) The reaction to the letter in Israel and Judah.

So the runners passed from city to city through the country of Ephraim and Manasseh, as far as Zebulun; but they laughed at them and mocked them. Nevertheless some from Asher, Manasseh, and Zebulun humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem. Also the hand of God was on Judah to give them singleness of heart to obey the command of the king and the leaders, at the word of the LORD.

a. **But they laughed at them and mocked**

**them:** Mostly, the reception among the remnant of the northern kingdom was not

warm. Reflecting the same attitude of heart that brought the kingdom as a whole into exile, the people of the northern kingdom **laughed at** and **mocked** the messengers who invited them to this great Passover in Jerusalem.

i. We note there was no rational argument against the invitation; it was all opposed with simple laughter and mocking. For the

frivolous and simple-minded, these replace serious thought.

ii. "Josephus saith that these Israelites this invited slew both the messengers and those prophets also that exhorted them to go up." (Trapp)

**b. Nevertheless some from Asher, Manasseh, and Zebulun humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem:**

Happily, there was a remnant of the remnant that responded to the message and came from the former northern kingdom.

i. "Far more northerners participated than previously, and the recent fall of the northern kingdom in 722 B.C. meant that Jerusalem now offered the only alternative

for corporate worship of the Lord." (Selman) c. **The hand of God was on Judah:** The response among the peoples and villages of Judah was entirely different. God gave **them singleness of heart to obey the command** of the LORD and their king.

B. The Passover celebrated.

1. (13-17) Preparations and sacrifices made.

Now many people, a very great assembly, gathered at Jerusalem to keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread in the second month. They arose and took away the altars that *were* in Jerusalem, and they took away all the incense altars and cast *them* into the Brook Kidron. Then they slaughtered the Passover *lambs* on the fourteenth *day* of the second month. The priests and the Levites were ashamed, and sanctified themselves, and brought the burnt offerings to the house of the LORD. They stood in their place according to their custom, according to the Law of Moses the man of God; the priests sprinkled the blood *received* from the hand of the Levites.

For *there were* many in the assembly who had not sanctified themselves; therefore the Levites had charge of the slaughter of the Passover *lambs* for everyone *who was* not clean, to sanctify *them* to the LORD.

a. **Many people, a very great assembly:** This was the greatest assembly gathered for a Passover in generations. Not only had the Passover been neglected in Judah for many years, but this Passover also included those from the remnant of the northern tribes who responded to the invitation.

b. **They arose and took away the altars**

**that were in Jerusalem:** These were either altars to pagan gods or unauthorized altars to the true God. Both were prohibited, and as a demonstration of preparation for this great Passover, the city was cleansed of all idolatrous or unauthorized worship.

i. "So must we also first cast the baggage into the brook, and then come to the Lord's supper." (Trapp)

c. **Then they slaughtered the Passover**

**lambs on the fourteenth day of the second month:**

This shows the Passover being celebrated according to the Scriptural commands (allowing for the celebration of Passover in the second month according to Num. 9:5-14). They took care to honor and obey in their celebration of this important feast.

2. (18-20) God is merciful to the ignorant worshippers.

For a multitude of the people, many from Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulun, had not cleansed themselves, yet they ate the Passover contrary to what was written. But Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, "May the good LORD provide atonement for everyone *who* prepares his heart to seek God, the LORD God of his fathers, though *he is* not *cleansed* according to the purification of the sanctuary." And the LORD listened to Hezekiah and healed the people.

a. **For a multitude of the people . . . had not cleansed themselves:** This **multitude** seems to have mostly come from the remnant of the northern tribes, who would naturally be ignorant about how to properly prepare for Passover.

i. "It was a motley crowd which assembled, and multitudes of the people were utterly ignorant of the Divine arrangements for preparation. Hezekiah's tenderness was manifested in the pity he felt for these people, and in the prayer he offered on their behalf." (Morgan)

ii. "This largeness of heart is always characteristic of men who are really in fellowship with God, for it is in harmony with the heart of God." (Morgan)

b. **Yet they ate the Passover contrary to what was written:** We would expect that this would result in a great punishment or judgment against them. Instead, **Hezekiah prayed for them**, asking **the good LORD** to **provide atonement**. In response, **the LORD listened to Hezekiah and healed the people**.

i. This shows the wonderful and warm mercy of God. By the letter of the command the people deserved judgment for their disobedience. Yet God showed his mercy and goodness to those who had prepared their **heart to seek God**, though in ignorance they did not do it all according to the commandments.

ii. "Unaccustomed to temple usage, strangers to the temple rites, they had participated in the festivities of this great Passover without submitting first to the necessary ablutions. Their heart was prepared to seek God, they were proud of

the great past, they desired to stand right with the Lord God of their fathers; but they were sadly ignorant and careless. The only thing to be done was to pray that their ignorance and negligence might be forgiven." (Meyer)

iii. "You may not understand doctrine, creed, or rite; but be sure to seek God. No splendid ceremonial nor rigorous etiquette can intercept the seeking soul." (Meyer)

iv. Their pattern of preparing to receive the Passover is instructive for those who come to the communion table, especially those who feel unworthy to partake of communion.

- They forgot their differences and came together as one people.
- They removed their idols.
- They prepared their hearts.
- Their sins and ignorance were confessed.
- They prayed.

3. (21-22) Worship, teaching, and fellowship.

So the children of Israel who were present at Jerusalem kept the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days with great gladness; and the Levites and the priests praised the LORD day by day, *singing* to the LORD, accompanied by loud instruments. And Hezekiah gave encouragement to all the Levites who taught the good knowledge of the LORD; and they ate throughout the feast seven days, offering peace offerings and making confession to the LORD God of their fathers.

a. **So the children of Israel who were present at Jerusalem:** There was special **gladness** for these who had come from the northern tribes. They had never before experienced such obedient and joyful worship, where they **praised the LORD day by day, singing to the LORD.**

**b. All the Levites who taught the good**

**knowledge of the LORD:** The gathering at this Passover was not only given to worship, but also to teaching. This was helpful and good at all times; one might say it was *urgently needed* with the presence of the northern tribes.

i. This remnant of the remnant of the northern tribes came to God in ignorance and in His mercy, God received them (2Ch. 30:18-20). Yet God didn't want to *leave* them in ignorance, so He used the Levites **who taught the good knowledge of the LORD.**

ii. "It is a fine and expressive character given of these men. 'They taught the good knowledge of God to the people.' This is the great work, or should be so, of every Christian minister. They should convey that knowledge of God to the people by which they may be saved; that is, *the good knowledge of the Lord.*" (Clarke) c. **They ate throughout the feast seven days, offering peace offerings and making confession:**

The third component to their gather was *fellowship*. They shared the same food, the same relationship with God (demonstrated by the **peace offerings**) and the same need for Him (demonstrated by their **confession** of sin).

i. " *Making confession*: either, 1. Confessing their sins; which work was to accompany many of their sacrifices; of which see Lev.

5:5; 16:21. Or rather, 2. Confessing God's goodness, or praising of God, which oft goes under this name, as 1Ch. 16:8, 24, which also seems to be more proper work for this season of joy." (Poole)

4. (23-27) The resulting joy and answered prayer.

Then the whole assembly agreed to keep *the feast* another seven days, and they kept it *another* seven days with gladness. For Hezekiah king of Judah gave to the assembly a thousand bulls and seven thousand sheep, and the leaders gave to the assembly a thousand bulls and ten thousand sheep; and a great number of priests sanctified themselves. The whole assembly of Judah rejoiced, also the priests and Levites, all the assembly that came from Israel, the sojourners who came from the land of Israel, and those who dwelt in Judah. So there was great joy in Jerusalem, for since the time of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel, *there had* been nothing like this in Jerusalem. Then the priests, the Levites, arose and blessed the people, and their voice was heard; and their prayer came *up* to His holy dwelling place, to heaven.

a. **The whole assembly agreed to keep the feast another seven days:** This was a remarkable and wonderful response to their experience of worship, teaching, and fellowship.

They *wanted* to make the necessary sacrifices to continue the feast for another week, and they did it **with gladness**.

i. There is no indication in the text that they offered more Passover lambs or continued eating unleavened bread, which belonged to the specific seasons of these feasts. The emphasis is on their continuation of worship, teaching, and fellowship.

ii. This was substantially supported by King Hezekiah. " *A thousand bullocks and seven thousand sheep;* which generosity is the more considerable, because it was in the beginning of his reign, when he found the royal exchequer exhausted and empty; and when he had been at great expense about the cleansing and refitting of the temple, and making preparations for this great feast." (Poole)

**b. Since the time of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel, there had been**

**nothing like this in Jerusalem:** Since those days there had not been a Passover in Jerusalem so widely and enthusiastically celebrated.

**c. The priests, the Levites, arose and**

**blessed the people:** According to Num. 6:22-27, it was the duty of the priests to bless the people with these words: *The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace.* As the priests obeyed this command, **their voice was heard, even to heaven** and the people were indeed blessed.

i. "The phrase 'the priests and the Levites' may here be rendered as 'the Levitical priests,' since it was the priests whom Moses had authorized 'to bless the people.'" (Payne)

© 2006 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** The king, his officials, and the entire assembly in Jerusalem decided to observe the Passover in the second month. **3** They were unable to observe it at the regular time because not enough priests had consecrated themselves and the people had not assembled in Jerusalem. **4** The proposal seemed appropriate to the king and the entire assembly. **5** So they sent an edict throughout Israel from Beer Sheba to Dan, summoning the people to come and observe a Passover for the LORD God of Israel in Jerusalem, for they had not observed it on a nationwide scale as prescribed in the law. **6** Messengers delivered the letters from the king and his officials throughout Israel and Judah.

This royal edict read: "O Israelites, return to the LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, so he may return to you who have been spared from the kings of Assyria. **7**

Don't be like your fathers and brothers who were unfaithful to the LORD God of their ancestors, provoking him to destroy them, as you can see. **8** Now, don't be stubborn like your fathers! Submit to the LORD and come to his sanctuary which he has permanently consecrated.

Serve the LORD your God so that he might relent from his raging anger. **9** For if you return to the LORD, your brothers and sons will be shown mercy by their captors and return to this land. The LORD your God is merciful and compassionate; he will not reject you if you return to him."

**10** The messengers journeyed from city to city through the land of Ephraim and Manasseh as far as Zebulun, but people mocked and ridiculed them. **11** But some men from Asher, Manasseh, and Zebulun humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem. **12** In Judah God moved the people to unite and carry out the edict the king and the officers had issued at the LORD's command. **13** A huge crowd assembled in Jerusalem to observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread in the second month. **14** They removed the altars in Jerusalem; they also removed all the incense altars and threw them into the Kidron Valley.

**15** They slaughtered the Passover lamb on the fourteenth day of the second month. The priests and Levites were ashamed, so they consecrated themselves and brought burnt sacrifices to the LORD's temple. **16**

They stood at their posts according to the regulations outlined in the law of Moses, the man of God. The priests were splashing the blood as the Levites handed it to them.

**17** Because many in the assembly had not consecrated themselves, the Levites slaughtered the Passover lambs of all who were ceremonially unclean and could not consecrate their sacrifice to the LORD. **18** The majority of the many people from Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulun were ceremonially unclean, yet they ate the Passover in violation of what is prescribed in the law. For Hezekiah prayed for them, saying: "May the LORD, who is good, forgive **19**

everyone who has determined to follow God, the LORD God of his ancestors, even if he is not ceremonially clean according to the standards of the temple.” **20** The LORD responded favorably to Hezekiah and forgave the people.

**21** The Israelites who were in Jerusalem observed the Feast of Unleavened Bread for seven days with great joy.

The Levites and priests were praising the LORD every day with all their might. **22** Hezekiah expressed his appreciation to all the Levites, who demonstrated great skill in serving the LORD. They feasted for the seven days of the festival, and were making peace offerings and giving thanks to the LORD God of their ancestors.

**23** The entire assembly then decided to celebrate for seven more days; so they joyfully celebrated for seven more days.

**24** King Hezekiah of Judah supplied 1,000 bulls and 7,000 sheep for the assembly, while the officials supplied them with 1,000 bulls and 10,000 sheep. Many priests consecrated themselves. **25** The celebration included the entire assembly of Judah, the priests, the Levites, the entire assembly of those who came from Israel, the resident foreigners who came from the land of Israel, and the residents of Judah. **26** There was a great celebration in Jerusalem, unlike anything that had occurred in Jerusalem since the time of King Solomon son of David of Israel. **27** The priests and Levites got up and pronounced blessings on the people. The LORD responded favorably to them as their prayers reached his holy dwelling place in heaven.

**1** When all this was over, the Israelites who were in the cities of Judah went out and smashed the sacred pillars, cut down the Asherah poles, and demolished all the high places and altars throughout Judah, Benjamin, Ephraim, and Manasseh. Then all the Israelites returned to their own homes in their cities.

Guzik - 2 Chronicles 31:1-21

### ***2 Chronicles 31 - Provision for the Priests***

A. The aftermath of Hezekiah's Passover.

1. (1) The work against idolatry.

Now when all this was finished, all Israel who were present went out to the cities of Judah and broke the sacred pillars in pieces, cut down the wooden images, and threw down the high places and the altars; from all Judah, Benjamin, Ephraim, and Manasseh; until they had utterly destroyed them all. Then all the children of Israel returned to their own cities, every man to his possession.

a. **All Israel who were present went out to the cities of Judah and broke the sacred pillars:** After the glorious double-length Passover celebration, the people renounced all idolatry in the strongest terms possible.

i. "Hezekiah's previous emphasis on removing the paraphernalia of idol worship ( *cf.* 2Ch. 29:15-19; 30:14; also 2Ki. 18:22) now became a popular movement." (Selman)

b. **From all Judah, Benjamin, Ephraim, and Manasseh:** This shows how broad the work was, including not only the Kingdom of Judah but also substantial portions of the territory of the northern tribes.

i. This reformation "was not only carried on through *Judah*, but they carried it into *Israel*; whether through a transport of religious zeal, or whether with the *consent* of Hoshea the Israelitish king, we cannot tell." (Clarke)

2. (2-3) The restoration and support of the regular priestly work.

And Hezekiah appointed the divisions of the priests and the Levites according to their

divisions, each man according to his service, the priests and Levites for burnt offerings and peace offerings, to serve, to give thanks, and to praise in the gates of the camp of the LORD. The king also *appointed* a portion of his possessions for the burnt offerings: for the morning and evening burnt offerings, the burnt offerings for the Sabbaths and the New

Moons and the set feasts, as *it is* written in the Law of the LORD.

a. **And Hezekiah appointed the divisions of the priests and the Levites according to their divisions:**

Hezekiah did not allow the recent Passover celebration to be a one-time event. He followed up by the organization and institution of the regular priestly service.

i. "The Hebrew for Hezekiah's assigning the priests to divisions is definite: he 'appointed THE divisions of the priests.' He reestablished the twenty-four rotating courses that had been set up by David (1 Chronicles 25) to insure orderly worship." (Payne)

b. **For burnt offerings . . . to serve . . . to give thanks . . . and to praise in the gates:** This shows some of the duties of the **priests and the Levites**. Their work included the administration of the sacrifices, general service, and worship.

i. **In the gates of the camp of the LORD:**

"Of the temple, fitly compared to a camp, for the watch and the ward there kept by the priests, and for the convention of the people thither, as to their rendezvous, to pray, which is the chief service of our spiritual warfare." (Trapp)

c. **The king also appointed a portion of his possessions:** King Hezekiah was so committed to the restoration of the proper priestly service that he personally supported their work with a **portion of his possessions**.

3. (4-5) The tithe is commanded and brought.

Moreover he commanded the people who dwelt in Jerusalem to contribute support for the priests and the Levites, that they might devote themselves to the Law of the LORD. As soon as the commandment was circulated, the children of Israel brought in abundance the firstfruits of grain and wine, oil and honey,

and of all the produce of the field; and they brought in abundantly the tithe of everything.

**a. Moreover he commanded the people who dwelt in Jerusalem to contribute**

**support for the priests and the Levites:** King Hezekiah did not present this as an *option* for the people of Judah. They were **commanded** to fulfill their obligations under the Law of Moses to support the priesthood through their tithes (Num. 18:21-24).

i. As God said in Num. 18:21, *I have given the children of Levi all the tithes in Israel.*

God commanded the tithes (a giving of ten percent of one's income) be given to the Levites for their support. This establishes the principle that the tithes *belong* to God (He said *I have given*, so they are His to give), but He gave them to the Levites.

ii. When an Israelite failed to give their tithe, they were not robbing the Levite - though the money ended up with them. They were robbing God (Mal. 3:8-10), because God received the tithe from the giver, and He gave it to the Levite.

iii. Some today think the tithe, since it went to support the Levites (who were, in a sense, government workers in ancient Israel), is covered by government taxes of today, and that free-will giving mentioned in the Old Testament answers to the New Testament emphasis on giving. We can say that the New Testament nowhere specifically commands tithing, but it certainly does speak of it in a positive light, if it is done with a right heart (Luk. 11:42).

iv. It is also important to understand that tithing is not a principle dependent on the Mosaic Law; as Heb. 7:5-9

explains, tithing was practiced and honored by God before the Law of Moses.

v. What the New Testament does speak with great clarity on is the principle of giving; that giving should be regular, planned, proportional, and private (1Co. 16:1-4); that it must be generous, freely given, and cheerful (2 Corinthians 9).

vi. Since the New Testament doesn't emphasize tithing, one might not be strict on it for Christians (though some Christians do argue against tithing on the basis of self-interest); but since giving is to be proportional, we should be giving *some* percentage - and ten percent is a good benchmark - and starting place! For some to give ten percent is nowhere near enough; for others, at their present time, five percent may be a massive step of faith.

vii. If our question is, "How little can I give and still be pleasing to God?" our heart isn't in the right place at all. We should have the attitude of some early Christians, who essentially said: "We're not under the tithe - we can give *more!*" Giving and financial management is a *spiritual* issue, not just a financial one (Luk. 16:11).

**b. That they might devote themselves to the Law of the LORD:** This reminds us of another duty of the Levites, beyond what was mentioned in 2Ch. 31:2 - the study and teaching of **the Law of the LORD**. The support of the Levites through the tithes of the people enabled this.

i. This is much the same principle as what Paul wrote in 1Ti. 5:17-18: *Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain," and, "The laborer is worthy of his wages."*

**c. As soon as the commandment was**

**circulated . . . they brought in abundantly the tithe of everything:** The response of the people was impressive. Instead of thinking of reasons why this command did not apply to them or excuses to relieve themselves of the obligation, **they brought in abundantly the tithe of everything.**

i. "The *firstfruits* were the priests prerogative (Num. 18:12-13), but the *tithe*, whether of crops and fruit or the herds was presented to the Levites (Num. 18:21; cf. Lev. 27:30-33)." (Selman)

B. The distribution and blessing of the tithe.

1. (6-10) The reception of the tithes.

And the children of Israel and Judah, who dwelt in the cities of Judah, brought the tithe of oxen and sheep; also the tithe of holy things which were consecrated to the LORD their God they laid in heaps. In the third month they began laying them in heaps, and they finished in the seventh month. And when Hezekiah and the leaders came and saw the heaps, they blessed the LORD and His people Israel. Then Hezekiah questioned the priests and the Levites concerning the heaps. And Azariah the chief priest, from the house of Zadok, answered him and said, "Since *the people* began to bring the offerings into the house of the LORD, we have had enough to eat and have plenty left, for the LORD has blessed His people; and what is left *is* this great abundance."

a. **In the third month they began laying**

**them in heaps:** The giving of tithes was so abundant that it took four months to simply receive all the gifts. No wonder Hezekiah and the leaders **blessed the LORD and His people Israel** when they saw the evidence of generous giving.

i. " *They blessed the Lord*; both for giving such plentiful provisions to his land in this year, and for giving his people such liberal and pious hearts towards this good work." (Poole)

ii. Their happiness was not only because it meant that there would be plenty for the

priests and Levites, it also showed that the Spirit of God was working powerfully in the people of Israel.

iii. **The tithe of holy things:** "The *tithe of the holy* or *dedicated things* probably refers to gifts made by the Levites to the priest from what they themselves had received." (Selman)

b. **Since the people began to bring the offerings into the house of the LORD, we have had enough to eat and have plenty left:** The priests and Levites had long been neglected, and now they had plenty.

2. (11-19) The administration of the tithes.

Now Hezekiah commanded *them* to prepare rooms in the house of the LORD, and they prepared them. Then they faithfully brought in the offerings, the tithes, and the dedicated things; Cononiah the Levite had charge of them, and Shimei his brother *was* the next. Jehiel, Azaziah, Nahath, Asahel, Jerimoth, Jozabad, Eliel, Ismachiah, Mahath, and Benaiah *were* overseers under the hand of Cononiah and Shimei his brother, at the commandment of Hezekiah the king and Azariah the ruler of the house of God.

Kore the son of Imnah the Levite, the keeper of the East Gate, *was* over the freewill offerings to God, to distribute the offerings of the LORD and the most holy things. And under him *were* Eden, Miniamin, Jeshua, Shemaiah, Amariah, and Shecaniah, *his* faithful assistants in the cities of the priests, to distribute allotments to their brethren by divisions, to the great as well as the small. Besides those males from three years old and up who were written in the genealogy, they distributed to everyone who entered the house of the LORD his daily portion for the work of his service, by his division, and to the priests who were written in the genealogy according to their father's house, and to the Levites from twenty years old and up according to their work, by their divisions, and to all who were written in the genealogy; their

little ones and their wives, their sons and daughters, the whole company of them; for in their faithfulness they sanctified themselves in holiness. Also for the sons of Aaron the priests, *who were* in the fields of the common-lands of their cities, in every single city, *there were* men who were designated by name to distribute portions to all the males among the priests and to all who were listed by genealogies among the Levites.

**a. Hezekiah commanded them to prepare**

**rooms in the house of the LORD:** King Hezekiah was wise enough to know that it was important to properly manage the generous gifts of God's people. They were concerned to do everything **faithfully**, out of respect to both God and His people who generously gave.

**b. Cononiah the Levite had charge of**

**them:** Hezekiah put faithful men in positions of responsibility and accountability over these tithes. The king knew that faithful administration is promoted when people are

accountable as **overseers**.

i. "Good planning and the implementation of adequate supporting structures provide a framework in which wholehearted and meaningful worship can take place. Hezekiah therefore prepared storerooms to receive the gifts, and various officials were appointed to collect and distribute them." (Selman) c.

**They distributed to everyone who entered the house of the LORD his daily**

**portion for the work of his service:** The tithes were used to support those who did the **work** of ministry unto the LORD and His people (and of course, to support their families as well).

i. "This is alleged as a reason why their wives and children were provided for out of the holy things, because they sequestered themselves from worldly affairs, by which

they might otherwise have provided for their families, and entirely devoted themselves to holy administrations." (Poole) ii. "Moses had ordered that the Levites should not begin their labour till they were *thirty* years of age: but David changed this order, and obliged them to begin at *twenty*." (Clarke)

3. (20-21) Hezekiah's godliness and prosperity.

Thus Hezekiah did throughout all Judah, and he did what *was* good and right and true before the LORD his God. And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, in the law and in the commandment, to seek his God, he did *it* with all his heart. So he prospered.

a. **He did what was good and right and**

**true before the LORD his God:** Hezekiah's godliness was exemplary among the kings of Judah. His concern was not primarily for political power or prestige, but for what was **good and right and true before the LORD.**

Additionally, when he did something **he did it with all his heart.**

i. "Hezekiah finished his task because he *sought* God *wholeheartedly*. In this, he complied with David's advice ( *cf.* 1Ch.

22:19; 28:9) and followed the pattern of other kings ( *cf.* 2Ch. 15:17; 22:29; *cf.* 2Ch. 11:16; 19:3)." (Selman)

ii. "In every respect he was a thoroughly excellent man, saw his duty to God and to

his people, and performed it with becoming zeal and diligence. May God ever send such

*kings* to the nations of the world; and may the *people* who are blessed with such be duly obedient to them, and thankful to the God who sends them!" (Clarke)

b. **So he prospered:** His prosperity was evidence of the blessing of God, especially in connection with his own generosity and wise stewardship.

i. "These words reveal his purpose, his method, and the result; and form a revelation of abiding value to all who are called upon to perform Divine service in any form. His purpose was 'to seek his God'; and the expression is exactly equivalent to that with which we are familiar: 'Seek ye first His kingdom.' His method was that of complete devotion, 'with all his heart.' The result was that of prosperity, that is, of success in the very work which was attempted." (Morgan)

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**2** Hezekiah appointed the divisions of the priests and Levites to do their assigned tasks – to offer burnt sacrifices and present offerings and to serve, give thanks, and offer praise in the gates of the LORD's sanctuary.

**3** The king contributed some of what he owned for burnt sacrifices, including the morning and evening burnt sacrifices and the burnt sacrifices made on Sabbaths, new moon festivals, and at other appointed times prescribed in the law of the LORD. **4** He ordered the people living in Jerusalem to contribute the portion prescribed for the priests and Levites so they might be obedient to the law of the LORD. **5** When the edict was issued, the Israelites freely contributed the initial portion of their grain, wine, olive oil, honey, and all the produce of their fields. They brought a tenth of everything, which added up to a huge amount. **6** The Israelites and people of Judah who lived in the cities of Judah also contributed a tenth of their cattle and sheep, as well as a tenth of the holy items consecrated to the LORD their God. They brought them and placed them in many heaps. **7** In the third month they began piling their contributions in heaps and finished in the seventh month. **8** When Hezekiah and the officials came and saw the heaps, they praised the LORD and pronounced blessings on his people Israel.

**9** When Hezekiah asked the priests and Levites about the heaps, **10** Azariah, the head priest from the family of Zadok, said to him, “Since the contributions began arriving in the LORD’s temple, we have had plenty to eat and have a large quantity left over. For the LORD has blessed his people, and this large amount remains.” **11** Hezekiah ordered that storerooms be prepared in the LORD’s temple. When this was done, **12** they brought in the contributions, tithes, and consecrated items that had been offered. Konaniah, a Levite, was in charge of all this, assisted by his brother Shimei. **13** Jehiel, Azaziah, Nahath, Asahel, Jerimoth, Jozabad, Eliel, Ismakiah, Mahath, and Benaiah worked under the supervision of Konaniah and his brother Shimei, as directed by King Hezekiah and Azariah, the supervisor of God’s temple.

**14** Kore son of Imnah, a Levite and the guard on the east side, was in charge of the voluntary offerings made to God and disbursed the contributions made to the LORD and the consecrated items. **15** In the cities of the priests, Eden, Miniamin, Jeshua, Shemaiah, Amariah, and Shecaniah faithfully assisted him in making disbursements to their fellow priests according to their divisions, regardless of age. **16** They made disbursements to all the males three years old and up who were listed in the genealogical records – to all who would enter the LORD’s temple to serve on a daily basis and fulfill their duties as assigned to their divisions. **17** They made disbursements to the priests listed in the genealogical records by their families, and to the Levites twenty years old and up, according to their duties as assigned to their divisions, **18** and to all the infants, wives, sons, and daughters of the entire assembly listed in the genealogical records, for they faithfully consecrated themselves. **19** As for the descendants of Aaron, the priests who lived in the outskirts of all their cities, men were assigned to disburse portions to

every male among the priests and to every Levite listed in the genealogical records.

**20** This is what Hezekiah did throughout Judah. He did what the LORD his God considered good and right and faithful. **21** He wholeheartedly and successfully reinstituted service in God's temple and obedience to the law, in order to follow his God.

**1** After these faithful deeds were accomplished, King Sennacherib of Assyria invaded Judah. He besieged the fortified cities, intending to seize them.

Guzik - 2 Chronicles 32:1-33

## **2 Chronicles 32 - God Protects Jerusalem**

A. God protects Jerusalem from the Assyrians.

1. (1) Sennacherib's attack.

After these deeds of faithfulness, Sennacherib king of Assyria came and entered Judah; he encamped against the fortified cities, thinking to win them over to himself.

a. **After these deeds of faithfulness:** Our tendency is to think that when we are genuinely faithful to God we will be immune from attack.

The experience of Hezekiah and countless other men and women of God tell us otherwise.

i. "It would seem to be a strange answer of God to the faithfulness of His child, that a strong foe should at the moment invade the kingdom; and yet how of the experience of

the people of God is of this nature." (Morgan)

ii. Adam Clarke had another perspective:

"God did not permit the pious prince to be *disturbed* till he had completed the reformation which he had begun."

b. **Sennacherib king of Assyria came and**

**entered Judah:** This was part of his larger campaign in the region, included the conquest of the northern tribes organized as the Kingdom of Judah.

i. We might say that the Chronicler is not telling us the complete story here. He does not include what we learn from 2Ki. 18:13-16, that Hezekiah unwisely and unsuccessfully tried to satisfy Sennacherib with gold and treasures from the temple. It didn't work, and after conquering most all the **fortified cities** of Judah, the king of Assyria prepared to set a siege against Jerusalem.

ii. "He clearly expects the reader to be familiar with 2 Kings 18-20, but, whereas the Chronicler normally adapts sections of earlier Scripture, here everything has been amplified and summarized in order to concentrate on the theme of Yahweh's supremacy." (Selman)

2. (2-8) Hezekiah prepares against the coming attack and siege of the Assyrians.

And when Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib had come, and that his purpose was to make war against Jerusalem, he consulted with his leaders and commanders to stop the water from the springs which *were* outside the city; and they helped him. Thus many people gathered together who stopped all the springs and the brook that ran through the land, saying, "Why should the kings of Assyria come and find much water?" And he strengthened himself, built up all the wall that was broken, raised *it* up to the towers, and *built* another wall outside; also he repaired the Millo *in* the City of David, and made weapons and shields in abundance. Then he set military captains over the people, gathered them together to him in the open square of the city gate, and gave them encouragement, saying, "Be strong and courageous; do not be afraid nor dismayed

before the king of Assyria, nor before all the multitude that *is* with him; for *there are* more with us than with him. With him *is* an arm of flesh; but with us *is* the LORD our God, to

help us and to fight our battles." And the people were strengthened by the words of Hezekiah king of Judah.

**a. To stop the water from the springs**

**outside the city:** This was done in preparation for the coming siege, and possibly in connection with the tunnel that Hezekiah directed to be cut to keep the water supply secure within the city (2Ch. 32:30).

i. "Jerusalem's water supply was vulnerable to any attack, since it was totally dependent on two springs, Gihon in the Kidron valley and En-Rogel two miles to the south." (Selman)

ii. "No doubt the Assyrian army suffered much through this, as a Christian army did eighteen hundred years after this. When the crusaders came, in A.D. 1099, to besiege Jerusalem, the people of the city stopped up the wells, so that the Christian army was reduced to the greatest necessities and distress." (Clarke)

**b. He strengthened himself, built up all the wall that was broken, raised it up to the towers:** This and the other preparations reflect how serious the threat was and how diligent Hezekiah was to defend Jerusalem and Judah.

i. "Part of a *wall* which could well be Hezekiah's has been uncovered on the western hill. At seven metres thick, it is the thickest Iron Age wall known in Palestine, and was presumably designed to withstand powerful Assyrian battering rams." (Selman)

**c. Be strong and courageous; do not be**

**afraid nor dismayed:** Hezekiah understood that the defense of Israel did not depend only on walls and towers and shields and water supplies; it also depended on the strength, courage, and determination of their soldiers.

i. **For there are more with us than with him:** "We have more power than they have.

(These words he quotes from the prophet Elisha, 2Ki. 6:16.) This was soon proved to be true by the slaughter made by the angel of the Lord in the Assyrian camp." (Clarke) ii. **But with us is the LORD our God:** "The import of 'Immanuel,' by which name Christ now began to be known amongst them." (Trapp)

3. (9-19) Sennacherib's propaganda campaign.

After this Sennacherib king of Assyria sent his servants to Jerusalem (but he and all the forces with him *laid siege* against Lachish), to Hezekiah king of Judah, and to all Judah who *were* in Jerusalem, saying, "Thus says Sennacherib king of Assyria: 'In what do you trust, that you remain under siege in Jerusalem? Does not Hezekiah persuade you to give yourselves over to die by famine and by thirst, saying, "The LORD our God will deliver us from the hand of the king of Assyria"? Has not the same Hezekiah taken away His high places and His altars, and commanded Judah and Jerusalem, saying, "You shall worship before one altar and burn incense on it"? Do you not know what I and my fathers have done to all the peoples of *other* lands? Were the gods of the nations of those lands in any way able to deliver their lands out of my hand? Who *was there* among all the gods of those nations that my fathers utterly destroyed that could deliver his people from my hand, that your God should be able to deliver you from my hand? Now therefore, do not let Hezekiah deceive you or persuade you like this, and do not believe him; for no god of any nation or kingdom was able to deliver his people from my hand or the hand of my fathers. How much less will your God deliver you from my hand?"' Furthermore, his servants spoke against the LORD God and against His servant Hezekiah. He also wrote letters to revile the LORD God of Israel, and to speak against Him, saying, "As the gods of the nations of *other* lands have not delivered their people from my hand, so the God of Hezekiah will not deliver His people from my hand." Then they called out with

a loud voice in Hebrew to the people of Jerusalem who *were* on the wall, to frighten them and trouble them, that they might take the city.

And they spoke against the God of Jerusalem, as against the gods of the people of the earth; the work of men's hands.

a. **Sennacherib king of Assyria sent his**

**servants to Jerusalem:** While the bulk of his army was busy at **Lachish**, Sennacherib sent some men to Jerusalem to prepare for the siege, especially with psychological combat.

i. The mention of **Lachish** is important historically. Lachish was thirty miles south-west of Jerusalem. Archaeologists have discovered a pit there with the remains of about 1,500 casualties of Sennacherib's attack. In the British Museum, you can see the Assyrian carving depicting their siege of the city of Lachish, which was an important fortress city of Judah.

ii. "An interesting wall relief taken from the excavation of Sennacherib's royal palace in Nineveh is preserved in the British Museum. It portrays the Assyrian king on a portable throne in his military camp outside Lachish. Prisoners of war are marching by on foot, and all the booty from the city is being displayed on ox-wagons." (Dillard)

b. **In what do you trust, that you remain under siege in Jerusalem?** These servants of Sennacherib (known as *the Tartan, the Rabsaris, and the Rabshakeh* in 2Ki. 18:17) tried to shake the trust Hezekiah and the people of Jerusalem had in the LORD.

i. We might wish that Hezekiah trusted in the LORD, and that this is what the Assyrians mocked. Instead, Hezekiah put his hope in an alliance with Egypt, and the Assyrians wanted him to lose confidence in that alliance.

ii. It was a great temptation for Hezekiah

during this time to make a defensive alliance with Egypt, which seemed to be the only nation strong enough to protect Judah against the mighty Assyrians. As a prophet, Isaiah did everything he could to discourage Hezekiah and the leaders of Judah from putting their trust in Egypt (Isa. 19:11-17, 20:1-6, 30:1-7). The LORD wanted Judah to trust Him instead of Egypt.

**c. Has not the same Hezekiah taken away**

**His high places and His altars:** The Assyrian accuser knew that King Hezekiah had implemented broad reforms in Judah, including the removal of the *high places* (2Ki. 18:3-4). Yet in the Assyrian's thinking, Hezekiah's reforms had really *displeased* God, so he should not expect help from the LORD God of Israel. The Assyrian would say, "Look at all the places there used to be where people would worship the LORD God of Israel. Now, since Hezekiah came in, there is only one place. More is always better, so the LORD God of Israel must be pretty sore at Hezekiah!"

i. The enemy of our souls has an amazing way of discouraging our disobedience. If Hezekiah was not careful, this argument of the Assyrian would start to make sense, when really it was demonic logic through and through.

ii. "The theological misunderstanding shown by the field commander at this point argues for the authenticity of the speech, which many critics have dubbed a free creation by the author of the narrative." (Grogan, Isaiah Commentary)

**d. Do you not know what I and my fathers have done to all the peoples of other lands?** The Assyrian's speech was intended to *destroy their trust in God*. His message was simple, and brilliant in its Satanic logic: "The gods of other nations have not been able to protect them against us. Your God is just like one of them, and can't protect you either."

i. For anyone who had the spiritual

understanding to see it, Judah could have started planning the victory party right then, when the Assyrian wrote **so the God of Hezekiah will not deliver His people**

**from my hand.** It is one thing to speak against Judah, its people and leaders. It was another thing all together to mock the LORD

God of Israel this way, and count Him as "just another god."

4. (20-23) Hezekiah's prayer and victory.

Now because of this King Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah, the son of Amoz, prayed and cried out to heaven. Then the LORD sent an

angel who cut down every mighty man of valor, leader, and captain in the camp of the king of Assyria. So he returned shamefaced to his own land. And when he had gone into the temple of his god, some of his own offspring struck him down with the sword there. Thus the LORD saved Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib the king of Assyria, and from the hand of all *others*, and guided them on every side. And many brought gifts to the LORD

at Jerusalem, and presents to Hezekiah king of Judah, so that he was exalted in the sight of all nations thereafter.

**a. King Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah, the son of Amoz, prayed and cried out to heaven:** We learn more about this powerful and beautiful prayer in 2Ki. 19:1-5. Hezekiah and Isaiah went into the House of the LORD and prayed humbly and passionately, and God heard from heaven.

i. "It was the indignity done to Jehovah that stirred these two holy men to the heart. . . .

Oh that we were possessed with a similar zeal for God, so that we might look at sin as it affects Him, and lament over the awful wrongs which are continually being

perpetrated against his holy, loving nature!

What an argument this would give us in prayer!" (Meyer)

ii. Isaiah the prophet brought assurance of the answer to this prayer to Hezekiah in 2Ki.

19:6-7.

**b. And the LORD sent an angel who cut**

**down every mighty man of valor:** Simply and powerfully, God destroyed this mighty army in one night. 185,000 died at the hand of the angel of the LORD (2Ki. 19:35). Against all odds, and against every expectation except the expectation of faith, the Assyrian army was turned back without having even shot an arrow into Jerusalem. The unstoppable was stopped, the undefeated was defeated.

i. The prophet Hosea made this same

prediction: *Yet I will have mercy on the house of Judah, will save them by the LORD*

*their God, and will not save them by bow, nor by sword or battle, by horses or horsemen.* (Hos. 1:7)

ii. "Herodotus, the Greek historian, recorded that one night Sennacherib's army camp was

infested with mice (or rats) that destroyed the arrows and shield-thongs of the soldiers.

He probably got this tradition from Egyptian sources, and it could well be a somewhat

garbled version of the event recorded here." (Grogan)

iii. Some have speculated that there was a

natural means that the angel used. "This has been thought to be a bacillary dysentery

which had a three-day incubation period." (Wiseman)

iv. "There was never a more conspicuous and glorious deliverance than when the

angel of God wrought for Israel against

Assyria." (Meyer)

v. "This event ranks, in fact, with Israel's crossing of the Red Sea as one of the two greatest examples of the Lord's intervention to save his people." (Payne)

**c. So he returned shamefaced to his own**

**land:** The shame seems to have left his face rather quickly. After this retreat from Judah, Sennacherib commissioned a record, which is preserved in the spectacular Annals of Sennacherib (the Taylor Prism), which can be seen in the British Museum. It shows how full of pride Sennacherib's heart still was, even if he could not even claim he conquered Jerusalem.

i. "I attacked Hezekiah of Judah who had not subjected himself to me, and took forty-six fortresses, forts and small cities. I carried away captive 200,150 people, big and small, both male and female, a multitude of horses, young bulls, asses, camels, and oxen.

Hezekiah himself I locked up in Jerusalem

like a bird in its cage. I put up banks against the city. I separated his cities whose

inhabitants I had taken prisoners from his realm and gave them to Mitiniti, king of

Ashdod, Padi, king of Ekron, and Zilbel, king of Gaza and thus diminished his country.

And I added another tax to the one imposed on him earlier." (Cited in Bultema, commentary on Isaiah)

ii. "The Biblical account concludes with the much debated statement that the Assyrian

army was struck down in some way during the night with considerable loss of life,

following which the siege was called off . . .

The Assyrian Annals tacitly agree with the Biblical version by making no claim that

Jerusalem was taken, only describing tribute from Hezekiah." (T.C. Mitchell, *The Bible in the British Museum*) iii. "God spared *Sennacherib*, not in mercy, but in wrath, reserving to him a more dreadful and shameful death by the hands of his own children." (Poole)

**d. And when he had gone into the temple of his god, some of his own offspring**

**struck him down with the sword there:** Some 20 years after he returned, his own sons killed him. Perhaps Sennacherib thought he had escaped the judgment of God, but he hadn't. He met the bitter end of death at the end of swords held by his own sons.

i. An old Jewish legend - and nothing more than a legend - says how it was that Sennacherib's sons came to kill him. Sennacherib was troubled at how God seemed to bless the Jews so much, and tried to find out why. Someone told him it was because Abraham had loved God so much that he was willing to sacrifice his son unto the LORD. Sennacherib thought he would be even more favored by God, and decided to kill two of his sons in sacrifice to the LORD, becoming even more blessed than Abraham and his descendants. But his two sons learned of the plan, and killed him before he could kill them, thus fulfilling the word of the LORD.

**ii. He was exalted in the sight of all**

**nations thereafter:** "They saw that God was his *friend*, and would undertake for him; and they did not wish to have such a man for their *enemy*." (Clarke)

B. The remainder of Hezekiah's reign.

1. (24-26) Hezekiah is humbled and God relents.

In those days Hezekiah was sick and near death, and he prayed to the LORD; and He spoke to him and gave him a sign. But Hezekiah did not repay according to the favor

*shown* him, for his heart was lifted up; therefore wrath was looming over him and over Judah and Jerusalem. Then Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the LORD did not come upon them in the days of Hezekiah.

a. **In those days:** This happened at the time of the Assyrian invasion of Judah, because Jerusalem had not been delivered from the

Assyrian threat yet (2Ki. 20:6). The events of this chapter are also recorded in Isaiah 38.

i. "Interpreters agree that the events described in chapters 38 and 39 preceded

the invasion of 701 B.C. . . Many date these events in 703 B.C., but the evidence more

strongly suggests a date of about 712 B.

C." (Wolf, commentary on Isaiah)

b. **Was sick and near death:** We are not told how Hezekiah became sick. It may have been through something obvious to all, or it may have been through something known only to

God. However Hezekiah became sick, it was certainly permitted by the LORD.

c. **He spoke to him and gave him a sign:** This sign - the sign of the retreating sundial - is recorded in 2Ki. 20:8-11.

d. **Hezekiah did not repay according to the favor shown him:** Sadly, Hezekiah did not receive this miracle with the gratitude that he should have. Yet he did humble **himself for the pride of his heart**, and was saved a greater judgment.

i. "All which probably raised in him too great an opinion of himself, as if these things were done, if not by his power, yet, at least, for his piety and virtues. And instead of walking humbly with God, and giving the glory all entirely to him, he took the honour to

himself, and vain-gloriously showed his riches and precious treasures to the

Babylonish ambassadors." (Poole)

2. (27-33) The summation of the reign of Hezekiah.

Hezekiah had very great riches and honor. And he made himself treasuries for silver, for gold, for precious stones, for spices, for shields, and for all kinds of desirable items; storehouses for the harvest of grain, wine, and oil; and stalls for all kinds of livestock, and folds for flocks. Moreover he provided cities for himself, and possessions of flocks and herds in abundance; for God had given him very much property. This same Hezekiah also stopped the water outlet of Upper Gihon, and brought the water by tunnel to the west side of the City of David. Hezekiah prospered in all his works. However, *regarding* the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, whom they sent to him to inquire about the wonder that was *done* in the land, God withdrew from him, in order to test him, that He might know all *that was* in his heart.

Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and his goodness, indeed they *are* written in the vision of Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, *and* in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel. So Hezekiah rested with his fathers, and they buried him in the upper tombs of the sons of David; and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem honored him at his death. Then Manasseh his son reigned in his place.

**a. Hezekiah had very great riches and honor . . . God had given him very much**

**property:** Hezekiah often generously used these great riches for good (2Ch. 31:3), but sometimes he managed his and the kingdom's wealth foolishly (2Ki. 20:12-21).

**b. Brought the water by tunnel to the west side of the City of David:** This tunnel was an amazing engineering feat. He built an aqueduct to insure fresh water inside the city walls even during sieges. It was more than 650 yards long through solid rock, begun on each end and meeting in the middle. It can still be seen today and it empties into the pool of Siloam.

i. "This tunnel, found in 1880, was cut for 643 metres to cover a direct distance of 332

metres to enable the defenders to fetch water within the protective walls even during a siege." (Wiseman)

ii. "An inscription in cursive Hebrew of the early eighth century B.C. details the work:"

'When (the tunnel) was driven through while (the quarrymen were swinging their) axes, each man towards the other and, while there was still 3 cubits to be cut through (there was heard) the voice of a man calling to his fellow, for there was a crevice (?) on the right . . . and when the tunnel was (finally) driven through, the quarrymen hewed each towards the others, axe against axe. Then the waters flowed from the Spring to the Pool for 1,200 cubits and the height of the rock above the head(s) of the quarrymen was 100 cubits.'" (Wiseman)

c. **However, regarding the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon:** This unfortunate chapter in the life of Hezekiah is recorded in 2Ki.

20:12-21. He was flattered by the visit of the ambassadors from this up-and-coming world

power, and showed them the riches of the kingdom - riches which they later took by siege and war.

i. "It was not *spiritual* pride, as with his great-grandfather Uzziah; but *worldly* pride -

'the pride of life,' we might say. It was *his* precious things, *his* armor, *his* treasures, *his* house, *his* dominion, etc., that he showed the ambassadors from Babylon." (Knapp) ii. In this case Hezekiah faced - and failed under - a temptation common to many, especially those in ministry - the temptation of success. Many men who stand strong against the temptations of failure and weakness fail under the temptations of success and strength.

d. **So Hezekiah rested with his fathers:** There is no doubt that Hezekiah started out as a godly king, and overall his reign was one of outstanding godliness. Yet his beginning was much better than his end; Hezekiah did not finish well. God gave Hezekiah the gift of 15 more years of life (2Ki. 20:6), but the added years did not make him a better or a more godly man.

i. Time or age doesn't necessarily make us any better. Consider that time does nothing but pass away. We sometimes say, "time will tell," "time will heal," or "time will bring out the potential in me." But time will do nothing of the sort! Time will only come and go. It is only how we *use* time that matters.

Hezekiah didn't make good use of the extra time the LORD gave him.

ii. "Hezekiah was buried on the sloping hill where the tombs of David's descendants were cut (2Ch. 32:33). This was because the royal Iron Age burial caves north of the city were full by this time and hereafter no Judean king was buried in the rock-hewn caves there." (Wiseman)

iii. "Notwithstanding the lapses of the latter days, the reign was most remarkable, especially when it is remembered how fearful was the condition into which the nation had come at this time." (Morgan)

© 2006 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** When Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib had invaded and intended to attack Jerusalem, **3** he consulted with his advisers and military officers about stopping up the springs outside the city, and they supported him. **4** A large number of people gathered together and stopped up all the springs and the stream that flowed through the district. They reasoned, "Why should the kings of Assyria come and find plenty of water?" **5** Hezekiah energetically rebuilt every broken wall. He erected towers

and an outer wall, and fortified the terrace of the City of David. He made many weapons and shields.

**6** He appointed military officers over the army and assembled them in the square at the city gate. He encouraged them, saying, **7** “Be strong and brave! Don’t be afraid and don’t panic because of the king of Assyria and this huge army that is with him! We have with us one who is stronger than those who are with him. **8** He has with him mere human strength, but the LORD our God is with us to help us and fight our battles!” The army was encouraged by the words of King Hezekiah of Judah.

**9** Afterward King Sennacherib of Assyria, while attacking Lachish with all his military might, sent his messengers to Jerusalem. The message was for King Hezekiah of Judah and all the people of Judah who were in Jerusalem. It read: **10** “This is what King Sennacherib of Assyria says: ‘Why are you so confident that you remain in Jerusalem while it is under siege? **11** Hezekiah says, “The LORD our God will rescue us from the power of the king of Assyria.”

But he is misleading you and you will die of hunger and thirst! **12** Hezekiah is the one who eliminated the LORD’s high places and altars and then told Judah and Jerusalem, “At one altar you must worship and offer sacrifices.” **13**

Are you not aware of what I and my predecessors have done to all the nations of the surrounding lands? Have the gods of the surrounding lands actually been able to rescue their lands from my power? **14** Who among all the gods of these nations whom my predecessors annihilated was able to rescue his people from my power? **15** Now don’t let Hezekiah deceive you or mislead you like this. Don’t believe him, for no god of any nation or kingdom has been able to rescue his people from my power or the power of my predecessors. So how can your gods rescue you from my power?’”

**16** Sennacherib’s servants further insulted the LORD God and his servant Hezekiah. **17** He wrote letters mocking the

LORD God of Israel and insulting him with these words: “The gods of the surrounding nations could not rescue their people from my power. Neither can Hezekiah’s god rescue his people from my power.” **18** They called out loudly in the Judahite dialect to the people of Jerusalem who were on the wall, trying to scare and terrify them so they could seize the city. **19** They talked about the God of Jerusalem as if he were one of the man-made gods of the nations of the earth.

**20** King Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz prayed about this and cried out to heaven. **21** The LORD sent a messenger and he wiped out all the soldiers, princes, and officers in the army of the king of Assyria. So Sennacherib returned home humiliated. When he entered the temple of his god, some of his own sons struck him down with the sword. **22** The LORD delivered Hezekiah and the residents of Jerusalem from the power of King Sennacherib of Assyria and from all the other nations. He made them secure on every side. **23** Many were bringing presents to the LORD in Jerusalem and precious gifts to King Hezekiah of Judah. From that time on he was respected by all the nations.

**24** In those days Hezekiah was stricken with a terminal illness. He prayed to the LORD, who answered him and gave him a sign confirming that he would be healed. **25**

But Hezekiah was ungrateful; he had a proud attitude, provoking God to be angry at him, as well as Judah and Jerusalem. **26** But then Hezekiah and the residents of Jerusalem humbled themselves and abandoned their pride, and the LORD was not angry with them for the rest of Hezekiah’s reign.

**27** Hezekiah was very wealthy and greatly respected. He made storehouses for his silver, gold, precious stones, spices, and all his other valuable possessions. **28** He made storerooms for the harvest of grain, wine, and olive oil, and stalls for all his various kinds of livestock and his flocks. **29**

He built royal cities and owned a large number of sheep and cattle, for God gave him a huge amount of possessions.

**30** Hezekiah dammed up the source of the waters of the Upper Gihon and directed them down to the west side of the City of David. Hezekiah succeeded in all that he did. **31**

So when the envoys arrived from the Babylonian officials to visit him and inquire about the sign that occurred in the land, God left him alone to test him, in order to know his true motives.

**32** The rest of the events of Hezekiah's reign, including his faithful deeds, are recorded in the vision of the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz, included in the Scroll of the Kings of Judah and Israel. **33** Hezekiah passed away and was buried on the ascent of the tombs of the descendants of David. All the people of Judah and the residents of Jerusalem buried him with great honor. His son Manasseh replaced him as king.

**1** Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned for fifty-five years in Jerusalem.

Guzik - 2 Chronicles 33:1-25

***2 Chronicles 33 - The Reigns of Manasseh and***

# Amon

A. The reign of Manasseh, son of Hezekiah.

1. (1-2) A summary of the reign of Manasseh, a 55 year rule of evil.

Manasseh *was* twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned fifty-five years in Jerusalem.

But he did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel.

**a. Manasseh was twelve years old when**

**he became king:** This means that he was born in the *last fifteen years* of Hezekiah's life, the *additional* fifteen years that Hezekiah prayed for (2Ki. 20:6). Those additional fifteen years brought Judah one of its worst kings.

i. "Had this good king been able to foresee the wickedness of his unworthy son, he

would doubtless have no desire to recover

from his sickness. Better by far die childless than beget a son such as Manasseh proved

to be." (Knapp)

**b. And he reigned fifty-five years in**

**Jerusalem:** This was both a remarkably long and a remarkably evil reign. A long career or longevity is not necessarily evidence of the blessing and approval of God.

i. "He was a son of David, but he was the very reverse of that king, who was always

faithful in his loyalty to the one only God of Israel. David's blood was in his veins, but David's ways were not in his heart. He was a wild, degenerate shoot of a noble vine." (Sprugeon)

**c. According to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD had cast out**

**before:** Manasseh imitated the sins of both the Canaanites and the Israelites of the northern kingdom (2Ki. 16:3). Since God brought judgment on these groups for their sin, casting them out of their land, then similar judgment against and unrepentant Judah should be expected.

2. (3-9) The specific sins of Manasseh.

For he rebuilt the high places which Hezekiah his father had broken down; he raised up altars for the Baals, and made wooden images; and he worshiped all the host of heaven and served them. He also built altars in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD had said, "In Jerusalem shall My name be forever." And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD. Also he caused his sons to pass through the fire in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom; he practiced soothsaying, used witchcraft and sorcery, and consulted mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger. He even set a carved image, the idol which he had made, in the house of God, of which God had said to David and to Solomon his son, "In this house and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, I will put My name forever; and I will not again remove the foot of Israel from the land which I have appointed for your fathers; only if they are careful to do all that I have commanded them, according to the whole law and the statutes and the ordinances by the hand of Moses." So Manasseh seduced Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to do more evil than the nations whom the LORD had destroyed before the children of Israel.

a. **He rebuilt the high places which**

**Hezekiah his father had broken down:** Manasseh opposed the reforms of his father Hezekiah and he brought Judah back into terrible idolatry.

i. This shows us that repentance and reform and revival are not permanent standing conditions. What is accomplished at one

time can be opposed and turned back at another time.

**b. He raised up altars for the Baals, and made wooden images:** Manasseh did not want to imitate his godly father. Instead, he imitated one of the very worst kings of Israel: Ahab. He embraced the same state-sponsored worship of Baal and Asherah (honored with **a wooden image**) that marked the reign of Ahab.

**c. He also built altars in the house of the LORD:** It was bad enough for Manasseh to allow this idol worship into Judah. Worse, he corrupted the worship of the true God at the temple, and made the temple a place of idol altars, including those dedicated to his cult of astrological worship (**he built altars for all the host of heaven**).

**d. He built altars for the host of heaven in the courts of the house of the LORD:** Manasseh did not only bring back old forms of idolatry; he also brought new forms of idolatry to Judah. At this time the Babylonian Empire was rising in influence, and they had a special attraction to astrological worship. Manasseh probably imitated this.

i. "The king's apostate worship of 'the starry host' had evil precedents going as far back as the time of Moses (Deu. 4:19; Act. 7:42), but such practices were a particular sin of Assyro-Babylonians, with their addiction to astrology." (Payne) ii. "But this Manasseh sought out for himself unusual

and outlandish sins. Bad as Ahab was, he had not worshipped the host of heaven. That was an Assyrian worship, and this man must needs import from Assyria and Babylonia worship that was quite new." (Spurgeon)

**e. He caused his sons to son pass through the fire:** Manasseh sacrificed his own son to the Canaanite god Molech, who was worshipped with the burning of children.

**f. Practiced soothsaying, used witchcraft and sorcery, and consulted mediums and spiritists:** Manasseh

invited direct Satanic influence by his approval and introduction of these occult arts.

i. "The Hebrew word for 'spiritists' is *yiddeoni*, by etymology, 'a knowing one.' It referred originally to ghosts, who were supposed to possess superhuman knowledge; but it came to be applied to those who claimed power to summon them forth, i.e., to witches." (Payne)

**g. He even set a carved image, the idol**

**which he had made, in the house of God:** The Chronicler seems too polite to say it, but 2Ki. 21:7 tells us that this **idol** was Asherah, the Canaanite goddess of fertility. This god was worshipped through ritual prostitution. This means that Manasseh made the temple into an idolatrous brothel, dedicated to Asherah.

i. "From the whole it is evident that Asherah was no other than *Venus*; the nature of whose worship is plain enough from the mention of *whoremongers* and *prostitutes*." (Clarke)

ii. "Manasseh *repeated these sins and exaggerated them each time*. After one forbidden idol had been enshrined, he set up another yet more foul, and after building altars in the courts of the temple, he ventured further . . . Thus he piled up his transgressions and multiplied his provocations." (Spurgeon)

**h. Manasseh seduced Judah and the**

**inhabitants of Jerusalem to do more evil than the nations whom the LORD had destroyed:** 1Ki. 21:9 tells us what the attitude of the people was: *they paid no attention*. This described the basic attitude of the people of Judah during the 55-year reign of Manasseh.

They *paid no attention* to the generous promises of God, promising protection to His obedient people. In addition, they were willingly **seduced** by Manasseh's wickedness and were attracted **to do more evil**.

i. "He did all he could to pervert the national character, and totally destroy the worship of the true God; and he succeeded." (Clarke) ii. "How superficial had been the nation's compliance with Hezekiah's reforms! Without a strong spiritual leader, the sinful people quickly turned to their own evil machinations. The judgment of God could not be far away." (Patterson and Austel) iii. This was a transformation of the culture from something generally God honoring to a culture that glorified idolatry and immorality. In general we can say this happened because the people *wanted* it to happen. They didn't care about the direction of their culture.

#### B. Manasseh's repentance.

##### 1. (10-11) God chastises of Manasseh.

And the LORD spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they would not listen. Therefore the LORD brought upon them the captains of the army of the king of Assyria, who took Manasseh with hooks, bound him with bronze *fetters*, and carried him off to Babylon.

##### a. **And the LORD spoke to Manasseh and**

**his people:** This was the great mercy of God.

He was under no obligation to warn or correct them; God would have been completely justified to bring judgment immediately. Instead, **the LORD spoke to Manasseh and his people.**

i. 2Ki. 21:10-15 tells more about these specific warnings of the prophets.

b. **But they would not listen:** Despite God's gracious warnings, neither the king nor the people would **listen**. God found more compelling ways to speak to the rulers and people of Judah.

i. 2Ki. 21:16 tells us of the terrible extent of Manasseh's sin: *Moreover Manasseh shed very much innocent blood, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another, besides his sin by which he made Judah sin, in doing evil in the sight of the LORD.*

ii. "We cannot vouch for the tradition that the prophet Isaiah was put to death by him by being sawn in sunder, but terrible as is the legend, it is not at all improbable." (Spurgeon)

**c. Therefore the LORD brought upon them the captains of the army of the king of**

**Assyria:** God allowed Manasseh to be taken and carried away as a captive, after the pattern of his own sinful bondage.

i. "God sent him into the dungeon to repent; as he did David into the depths, and Jonah into the whale's belly to pray. Adversity hath whipt many a soul to heaven, which otherwise prosperity had coached to hell." (Trapp)

ii. "No mention is made of Manasseh's exile in Assyrian sources, even though Manasseh appears in the annals of Esarhaddon (680-669 B.C.) and Ashurbanipal (668-626 B.C.) as a rather unwilling vassal forced to provide supplies for Assyria's building and military enterprises. It is quite possible that he rebelled against these impositions at some point." (Selman)

iii. "Manasseh's presence in *Babylon* is not surprising, since Assyria had had a long interest in Babylon, which was under the direct control for the whole of Esarhaddon's reign and after Shamash-shum-ukin's demise." (Selman)

**2. (12-13) The remarkable repentance of Manasseh.**

Now when he was in affliction, he implored the LORD his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, and prayed to Him; and He received his entreaty, heard his

supplication, and brought him back to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD *was* God.

a. **When he was in affliction, he implored the LORD his God:** Manasseh was not the first one (and not the last) to turn back to God after a severe season of **affliction**. It has been said that God speaks to us in our pleasures and he shouts to us in our pains. Manasseh finally listened to God's shouting through **affliction**.

i. "The Assyrians were notoriously a fierce people, and Manasseh, having provoked them, felt all the degradation, scorn, and cruelty which anger could invent. He who had trusted idols was made a slave to an idolatrous people; he who had shed blood very much was now in daily jeopardy of the shedding of his own; he who had insulted the Lord must now be continually insulted himself." (Spurgeon)

b. **And humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers:** The word **humbled** reminds us that the essence of Manasseh's sin was *pride*. The phrase **God of his fathers** reminds us that Manasseh returned to the godly heritage he received from his father Hezekiah.

i. This is a wonderful example of the principle, *Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it* (Pro. 22:6). Manasseh was raised by a godly father, yet he lived in defiance of his father's faith for most of his life. Nevertheless, at the end of his days he truly repented and served God.

c. **He received his entreaty, heard his supplication, and brought him back to Jerusalem into his kingdom:** God graciously restored the late-repenting Manasseh. This gracious response to Manasseh was the final step in his return to the LORD (**Then Manasseh knew that the LORD was God**).

i. "He was convinced by his own experience of God's power, justice, and goodness, that Jehovah alone was the true God, and not those idols which he had worshipped, by which he had received great hurt, and no good." (Poole)

ii. "Manasseh's repentance was evidently the chief subject in the mind of the chronicler, and while his sins are painted faithfully and revealed in all their hideousness, all becomes but background which flings into relief Manasseh's genuine penitence and the ready and gracious response to God." (Morgan)

iii. In his sermon, *The Old Testament "Prodigal,"* Spurgeon imagined what it would be like for the remnant of believers in Jerusalem to hear that Manasseh was returning from Babylon. They had a brief pause in the persecution they had suffered from the evil king, and at least a slow-down in the official promotion of idolatry. Now to hear he was coming back must have drove them to their knees, asking God to have mercy on them once again. Imagine their surprise when they found that King Manasseh returned a repentant, converted man!

iv. "Oh! I do not wonder at Manasseh's sin one half so much as I wonder at God's mercy." (Spurgeon)

3. (14-17) The late deeds of Manasseh.

After this he built a wall outside the City of David on the west side of Gihon, in the valley, as far as the entrance of the Fish Gate; and *it* enclosed Ophel, and he raised it to a very great height.

Then he put military captains in all the fortified cities of Judah. He took away the foreign gods and the idol from the house of the LORD, and all the altars that he had built in the

mount of the house of the LORD and in Jerusalem; and he cast *them* out of the city. He also repaired the altar of the LORD, sacrificed peace offerings and thank offerings on it, and commanded Judah to serve the LORD God of Israel. Nevertheless the people still sacrificed on the high places, *but* only to the LORD their God.

a. **After this he built a wall:** Before he was humbled and repentant, Manasseh didn't care very much for the defense of Judah and Jerusalem. Now, with a more godly perspective, he cared deeply about the security of God's people and the Kingdom of Judah.

i. "This was probably a weak place that he fortified; or a part of the wall which the Assyrians had broken down, which he now rebuilt." (Clarke)

b. **He took away the foreign gods and the idol from the house of the LORD:** Before he was humbled and repentant, Manasseh *promoted* the worship of idols. Now, he destroyed idols and promoted the worship of the true God of Israel alone; he even **commanded Judah to serve the LORD God of Israel.**

i. "Manasseh's religious reforms represented a direct reversal of earlier policies (vv. 2-9), since each of the items removed in verse 15

is mentioned in verses 3, 7." (Selman) ii. "Turn to Him with brokenness of soul, and He will not only forgive, but bring you out again; and give you, as He did Manasseh, an opportunity of undoing some of those evil things which have marred your past." (Meyer)

c. **Nevertheless the people still sacrificed on the high places, but only to the LORD their God:** This reminds us of the distinction between two different kinds of **high places**.

Some were altars to pagan idols; others were unauthorized altars to the true God. Manasseh stopped all the pagan worship in Judah, but unauthorized (that is, outside the temple) worship of the God of Israel continued.

i. "Half a century of paganism could not be counteracted by half-a-dozen years of reform." (Payne)

ii. "While repentance of personal sin brings ready forgiveness, the influence of the sin is terribly likely to abide." (Morgan) 4. (18-20) Manasseh's death and burial.

Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh, his prayer to his God, and the words of the seers who spoke to him in the name of the LORD God of Israel, indeed they *are written* in the book of the kings of Israel. Also his prayer and *how God* received his entreaty, and all his sin and trespass, and the sites where he built high places and set up wooden images and carved images, before he was humbled, indeed they *are written* among the sayings of Hozai. So Manasseh rested with his fathers, and they buried him in his own house.

Then his son Amon reigned in his place.

a. **The rest of the acts of Manasseh:** The Chronicler must refer to documents that have more information than the 2 Kings text. 2 Kings does not mention the repentance of Manasseh, and does not tell us anything about his reign substantially different than what we read in 2 Chronicles.

i. "Manasseh illustrates one of the central themes of Chronicles, that God can fulfil his promise of restoration in 2Ch. 7:12-16 to the repentant even in the most extreme circumstances." (Selman)

ii. "As for despair, it is damnable. While the story of Manasseh stands on record, no mortal hath a just excuse to perish in despair; no one is justified in saying, 'God will never forgive me.' Read over again the history of Manasseh; see to what lengths of sin he went, to what extravagant heights of evil

he climbed; and then say to yourself, 'Did sovereign mercy reach him? Then it can also reach me.' " (Spurgeon)

b. **So Manasseh rested with his fathers:** Manasseh was a remarkably bad and evil king; yet at the end of his days he truly repented and served God. In this way, we can say that it was very true that **Manasseh rested with his fathers.**

i. "Manasseh's conversion helps to explain a longstanding problem in Kings, namely, why

the exile did not fall in Manasseh's reign if his sins were really so serious." (Selman) ii. Yet, his repentance was too late to change the nation. "The widespread revolts during the reign of Ashurbanipal, which

occurred from 652-648 B.C., may provide the occasion for Manasseh's summons to Babylon and imprisonment. If so, his subsequent release and reform were apparently far too late to have much of an effect on the obdurately backslidden people." (Patterson and Austel)

iii. It was also not soon enough to change the *destiny* of the kingdom. "Years later, when Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians, the writer would blame Judah's punishment on the sins of Manasseh (2Ki. 24:3-4)." (Dilday)

iv. Manasseh was "more than any other single person was responsible for the final destruction of the kingdom of Judah (2Ki.

23:26; 24:3; Jer. 15:4)." (Payne)

C. The reign of Amon, son of Manasseh.

1. (21-23) A two year, evil reign

Amon *was* twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned two years in Jerusalem. But he did evil in the sight of the LORD, as his father Manasseh had done; for Amon sacrificed to all the carved images which his father Manasseh had made, and served them. And he did not humble himself before the LORD, as his father Manasseh had humbled himself; but Amon trespassed more and more.

a. **He reigned two years in Jerusalem:** This unusually short reign is an indication that the blessing of God was *not* upon the reign of Amon.

b. **And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, as his father Manasseh had done . . . he did not humble himself before the LORD, as his father Manasseh had:** Amon sinned as Manasseh had sinned, without having the

repentance that Manasseh repented. It is likely that one of the greatest sorrows to the

repentant Manasseh was that his sons and others who were influenced by his sin did not also repent.

i. "There is not one bright spot in this king's character to relieve the darkness of his life's brief record." (Knapp) ii.

"Glycas saith that Amon hardened himself in sin by his father's example, who took his swing in sin, and yet at length repented. So, thought he, will I do; wherefore he was soon sent out of the world for his presumption, dying in his sins, as 2Ch. 33:23." (Trapp) iii. "Manasseh and Amon in their contrasting ways show that a fatalistic attitude in the face of God's judgment is quite unjustified." (Selman)

2. (24-25) The assassination of Amon.

Then his servants conspired against him, and killed him in his own house. But the people of the land executed all those who had conspired against King Amon. Then the people of the land made his son Josiah king in his place.

a. **His servants conspired against him, and killed him in his own house:** This story of conspiracy and assassination seems to belong among the kings of *Israel*, not Judah. Yet when the kings and people of Judah began to imitate the sins of their conquered northern neighbors, they slipped into the same chaos and anarchy that marked the last period of Israel's history.

i. "Although the Scriptures give no reason for the conspiracy, its cause may lie within the tangled web of revolts that

Asurbanipal suppressed from 642-639 and that caused him to turn his attention to the west. . . .

Amnon's death may thus reflect a power struggle between those who wished to remain loyal to the Assyrian crown and those who aspired to link Judah's fortunes to the rising star of Psammetik I (664-609) of Egypt's Twenty-Sixth Dynasty." (Patterson and Austel)

**b. But the people of the land executed all those who had conspired against King Amon:** This was a hopeful sign. Up to this point, the people of Judah had largely tolerated some 57 years of utterly wicked kings who led the nation in evil. Now it seems that they wanted righteousness and justice instead of the evil they had lived with for so long.

i. In some way, it could be said that the people of Judah had these wicked kings for more than 50 years because *that is what they wanted*. God gave them the leaders they wanted and deserved. Now, as the people of the kingdom turned towards godliness, God will give them a better king.

**c. Then the people of the land made his son Josiah king in his place:** Though king Amon was assassinated, God did not yet allow Judah to slip into the same pit of anarchy that Israel had sunk into. Because of the righteous action of **the people of the land**, there was no change of *dynasty*, and the rightful heir to the throne of David received the throne.

i. "The only positive contribution Amon made to the history of Judah was to produce one of the best kings to reign on the throne of Jerusalem." (Dilday)

© 2006 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission **2** He did evil in the sight of the LORD and committed the same horrible sins practiced by the nations whom the LORD drove out ahead of the Israelites. **3**

He rebuilt the high places that his father Hezekiah had destroyed; he set up altars for the Baals and made Asherah poles. He bowed down to all the stars in the sky and worshiped them. **4** He built altars in the LORD's temple, about which the LORD

had said, "Jerusalem will be my permanent home." **5** In the two courtyards of the LORD's temple he built altars for all the stars in the sky. **6** He passed his sons through the fire in the Valley of Ben-Hinnom and practiced divination, omen reading, and sorcery. He set up a ritual pit to conjure up underworld spirits and appointed magicians to supervise it. He did a great amount of evil in the sight of the LORD and angered him. **7** He put an idolatrous image he had made in God's temple, about which God had said to David and to his son Solomon, "This temple in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, will be my permanent home. **8** I will not make Israel again leave the land I gave to their ancestors, provided that they carefully obey all I commanded them, the whole law, the rules and regulations given to Moses."

**9** But Manasseh misled the people of Judah and the residents of Jerusalem so that they sinned more than the nations whom the LORD had destroyed ahead of the Israelites.

**10** The LORD confronted Manasseh and his people, but they paid no attention. **11** So the LORD brought against them the commanders of the army of the king of Assyria.

They seized Manasseh, put hooks in his nose, bound him with bronze chains, and carried him away to Babylon. **12**

In his pain Manasseh asked the LORD his God for mercy and truly humbled himself before the God of his ancestors.

**13** When he prayed to the LORD, the LORD responded to him and answered favorably his cry for mercy. The LORD brought him back to Jerusalem to his kingdom. Then Manasseh realized that the LORD is the true God.

**14** After this Manasseh built up the outer wall of the City of David on the west side of the Gihon in the valley to the entrance of the Fish Gate and all around the terrace; he made it much higher. He placed army officers in all the fortified cities in Judah.

**15** He removed the foreign gods and images from the LORD's temple and all the altars he had built on the hill of the LORD's temple and in Jerusalem; he threw them outside the city. **16** He erected the altar of the LORD and offered on it peace offerings and thank offerings. He told the people of Judah to serve the LORD God of Israel. **17**

The people continued to offer sacrifices at the high places, but only to the LORD their God.

**18** The rest of the events of Manasseh's reign, including his prayer to his God and the words the prophets spoke to him in the name of the LORD God of Israel, are recorded in the Annals of the Kings of Israel. **19** The Annals of the Prophets include his prayer, give an account of how the LORD responded to it, record all his sins and unfaithful acts, and identify the sites where he built high places and erected Asherah poles and idols before he humbled himself. **20** Manasseh passed away and was buried in his palace. His son Amon replaced him as king.

**21** Amon was twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned for two years in Jerusalem. **22** He did evil in the sight of the LORD, just like his father Manasseh had done. He offered sacrifices to all the idols his father Manasseh had made, and worshiped them. **23** He did not humble himself before the LORD as his father Manasseh had done. Amon was guilty of great sin. **24** His servants conspired against him and killed him in his palace. **25** The people of the land executed all who had conspired against King Amon, and they made his son Josiah king in his place.

**1** Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned for thirty-one years in Jerusalem.

Guzik - 2 Chronicles 34:1-33

## **2 Chronicles 34 - Josiah and the Book of the Law**

A. The beginnings of Josiah's reforms.

1. (1-2) A summary of the reign of Josiah, the son of Amon.

Josiah *was* eight years old when he became king, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem.

And he did *what was* right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the ways of his father David; *he* did *not* turn aside to the right hand or to the left.

a. **Josiah was eight years old when he**

**became king:** Unusually, this young boy came to the throne at **eight years** of age. This was because of the assassination of his father.

i. "At last, after more than three hundred years, the prophecy of 'the man of God out

of Judah' is fulfilled (1Ki. 13:2)." (Knapp) b. **He did what was right in the sight of the LORD:** This was true of Josiah at this young age; but it is really more intended as a general description of his reign rather than a description of him at eight years of age.

2. (3-7) Josiah against idolatry in Judah and the former Kingdom of Israel.

For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was still young, he began to seek the God of his father David; and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the high places, the wooden images, the carved images, and the molded images. They broke down the altars of the Baals in his presence, and the incense altars which *were* above them he cut down; and the wooden images, the carved images, and the molded images he broke in pieces, and made dust of them and scattered *it* on the graves of those who had sacrificed to them. He also burned the bones of the priests on their altars, and cleansed Judah and Jerusalem. And *so he did* in the cities of Manasseh, Ephraim, and Simeon, as far as Naphtali and all around, with axes. When he had broken down the altars and the wooden images, had beaten the carved images into powder, and cut down all the incense

altars throughout all the land of Israel, he returned to Jerusalem.

a. **He began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the high places, the wooden images, the carved images, and the molded**

**images:** The worship of this great variety of idols was entrenched after the reign of Amon.

The late reforms of Manasseh helped against this trend, but since the short but wicked reign of Amon there was much idolatry in the land.

i. The variety of idols described This shows *how deep* idolatry was in Judah. There were idols dedicated to **Baal** and to *Asherah* (2Ki.

23:4) and to *all the host of heaven* (2Ki.

23:5) in the *very temple itself* (2Ki. 23:4).

From the 2 Kings account, it seems that Josiah began the cleansing reforms at the center and worked outwards.

ii. " 'Seeking' in Chronicles describes the habit of looking to God in every situation, and also the attitude which God looks for in those who pray (2Ch. 7:14; 30:19)." (Selman)

iii. **In the twelfth year:** Payne connects this with "a particular time of chaos that occurred throughout the ancient Near East and that was precipitated by an invasion from the north of barbaric, nomadic horsemen known as the Scythians (628-626

B.C.) . . . Their incursions wrought terror among complacent Jews (Jer. 6:22-24; Zep. 1:12)."

iv. "Five or six several words are here used, to show how he mawled them, and made mortar of them, as we say; such was his

holy indignation, zeal, and revenge." (Trapp) b. **He also burned the bones of the priests on their altars:** Josiah did this both to carry out the prescribed punishment of idolatrous priests in Israel *and* to defile these pagan altars.

i. Josiah's reforms did not only remove sinful *things*, but also the sinful *people* that promoted and permitted these sinful things.

The idols that filled the temple did not get there or stay there on their own - there were **priests** who were responsible for these sinful practices.

ii. Any thorough reformation can not only deal with sinful things; it must also deal with sinful people. If sinful people are not dealt with, they will quickly bring back the sinful things that were righteously removed.

**c. And so he did in the cities of Manasseh, Ephraim, and Simeon . . . throughout all the land of Israel:**

Since the Kingdom of Israel had been conquered by the Assyrian Empire and was in the process of being depopulated in exile, Josiah could extend his reforms there also.

i. " *Even unto Naphtali*; which was in the utmost and northern borders of the kingdom

of Israel. For it must be remembered that the ten tribes were now gone into captivity; and those who were come in their stead

were weak and few, and not able to withstand the power of Josiah." (Poole) 3. (8-13) The restoration of the temple.

In the eighteenth year of his reign, when he had purged the land and the temple, he sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, Maaseiah the governor of the city, and Joah the son of Joahaz the recorder, to repair the house of the LORD his God. When they came to Hilkiah the high priest, they delivered the money that was brought into the house of God, which the Levites who kept the doors had gathered from the hand of Manasseh and

Ephraim, from all the remnant of Israel, from all Judah and Benjamin, and *which* they had brought back to Jerusalem. Then they put *it* in the hand of the foremen who had the

oversight of the house of the LORD; and they gave it to the workmen who worked in the house of the LORD, to repair and restore the house. They gave *it* to the craftsmen and builders to buy hewn stone and timber for beams, and to floor the houses which the kings of Judah had destroyed. And the men did the work faithfully. Their overseers *were* Jahath and Obadiah the Levites, of the sons of Merari, and Zechariah and Meshullam, of the sons of the Kohathites, to supervise. *Others of* the Levites, all of whom were skillful with instruments of music, *were* over the burden bearers and *were* overseers of all who did work in any kind of service. And *some* of the Levites *were* scribes, officers, and gatekeepers.

a. **In the eighteenth year of his reign:** After his energetic campaign to cleanse the land of Judah and Israel of idolatry, then Josiah put his efforts towards restoring the neglected temple, much as his predecessor Hezekiah had done (2 Chronicles 29).

i. "The Chronicler (2 Chronicles 34-35) appears to present a two-stage sequence of events: (i) the purification of religious practices in Judah, Jerusalem and Naphtali in Josiah's twelfth year, and (ii) a continuing reformation stimulated by the discovery of the Book of the Law in the eighteenth year.

But this may be a presentation to fit in with the Chronicler's particular emphases." (Wiseman)

ii. "If Josiah had not yet seen a copy of this book, (which is not impossible,) yet there was so much of the law left in the minds and memories of the people, as might easily persuade and direct him to all that he did till this time." (Poole)

iii. It is possible that Josiah was motivated to rebuild the temple after hearing (or remembering) that this was what King Jehoash did many years before (2 Kings 12).

**b. Then they put it in the hand of the foremen who had oversight of the house**

**of the LORD:** Josiah understood that the work of repair and rebuilding the temple needed organization and funding. He paid attention to both of these needs when he gave **Hilkiah** oversight over this restoration work of the temple. As a result, **the men did the work faithfully.**

i. According to Jer. 1:1-2, the Prophet Jeremiah was the son of this particular priest **Hilkiah**. Jeremiah began his ministry during the reign of King Josiah.

**4. (14-17) The discovery of the Book of the Law.**

Now when they brought out the money that was brought into the house of the LORD, Hilkiah the priest found the Book of the Law of the LORD

*given* by Moses. Then Hilkiah answered and said to Shaphan the scribe, "I have found the Book of the Law in the house of the LORD." And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan. So Shaphan carried the book to the king, bringing the king word, saying, "All that was committed to your servants they are doing. And they have gathered the money that was found in the house of the LORD, and have delivered it into the hand of the overseers and the workmen."

**a. Hilkiah the priest found the Book of the Law of the LORD:** According to Deu. 31:24-27, there was to be a copy of *this Book of the Law* beside the ark of the covenant, beginning in the days of Moses. The word of God was *with* Israel, but it was greatly *neglected* in those days.

i. " 'The Book,' however, seems to have become misplaced during the apostate administrations of the previous kings,

Manasseh and Amon, under whom the ark had been moved about (2Ch.

35:3)." (Payne)

ii. "Hilkiah's personal announcement, ' *I have found the Book of the Law*', stands out sharply . . . Secretary Shaphan confirms that the find took place in the context of the workers' faithfulness." (Selman)

iii. "Though a close connection between Josiah's scroll and Deuteronomy had been

accepted for a long time, the implications of this for the origins of Deuteronomy are

much more uncertain, since neither Kings or Chronicles provides direct evidence for the thesis, advocated repeatedly since 1805, that the scroll was composed as part of a

Deuteronomic reform movement." (Selman) iv. "Was this the *autograph* of Moses? It is very probable that it was; for in the parallel place, 2Ch. 34:14, it is said to be the book of *the law of the Lord by Moses*. It is supposed to be that part of Deuteronomy, (Deuteronomy 28-30, and 31,) which

contains the renewing of the covenant in the plains of Moab, and which contains the most terrible invectives against the corrupters of God's word and worship." (Clarke) b. **Shaphan carried the book to the king:**

Here the word of God spreads. It had been

forgotten and regarded as nothing more than an old, dusty book. Now it was found, read, and spread. We should expect some measure of spiritual revival and renewal to follow.

i. Throughout the history of the God's

people, when the word of God is recovered

and spread, then spiritual revival follows. It can begin as simply as it did in the days of Josiah, with one man find and reading and believing and spreading the Book.

ii. Another example of this in history is the story of Peter Waldo and his followers,

sometimes known as Waldenses. Waldo was

a rich merchant who gave up his business to radically follow Jesus. He hired two priests to translate the New Testament into the common language and using this, he began to teach others. He taught in the streets or wherever he could find someone to listen.

Many common people came to hear him and started to radically follow Jesus Christ. He taught them the text of the New Testament in the common language and was rebuked by church officials for doing so. He ignored the rebuke and continued to teach, eventually sending his followers out two by two into villages and market places, to teach and explain the scriptures. The scriptures were memorized by the Waldenses, and it was not unusual for their ministers to memorize the entire New Testament and large sections of the Old Testament. The word of God - when found, read, believed, and spread - has this kind of transforming power.

5. (18-21) King Josiah hears the Word of God.

Then Shaphan the scribe told the king, saying, "Hilkiah the priest has given me a book." And Shaphan read it before the king. Thus it happened, when the king heard the words of the Law, that he tore his clothes. Then the king commanded Hilkiah, Ahikam the son of Shaphan, Abdon the son of Micah, Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah a servant of the king, saying, "Go, inquire of the LORD for me, and for those who are left in Israel and Judah, concerning the words of the book that is found; for great *is* the wrath of the LORD that is poured out on us, because our fathers have not kept the word of the LORD, to do according to all that is written in this book."

a. **When the king heard the words of the**

**Law:** The hearing of God's word did a spiritual work in King Josiah. It was not merely the transmission of information; the hearing of God's word had an impact of spiritual power on Josiah.

i. "A medieval Archbishop of Canterbury . . . assumed that Josiah listened to the whole book at one sitting: 'What a contrast to our present-day kings and magnates! If once a year they hear the word of God preached, they find it nauseating and leave the church before the end of the sermon'." (Selman) b. **He tore his clothes:** The tearing of clothing was a traditional expression of horror and astonishment. In the strongest possible, Josiah showed his grief on his own account and on account of the nation. This was an expression of deep conviction of sin, and a good thing.

i. Revival and spiritual awakening are marked by such expressions of the conviction of sin. Dr. J. Edwin Orr, in *The Second Evangelical Awakening in Britain*, recounted some examples from the great movement that impacted Britain and the world in 1859-1861:

ii. This conviction of sin is the special work of the Holy Spirit, even as Jesus said in Joh.

16:8: "And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin."

c. **Go, inquire of the LORD for me:** It wasn't that King Josiah knew nothing of God or how to seek him. It was that he was so under the conviction of sin that he did not know what to do next.

d. **For great is the wrath of the LORD that is poured out on us:** Josiah knew that the kingdom of Judah deserved *judgment* from God.

He could not hear the word of God and respond to the Spirit of God without seriously confronting the sin of his kingdom.

6. (22-28) God speaks to King Josiah.

So Hilkiah and those the king *had appointed* went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tokhath, the son of Hasrah, keeper of the wardrobe. (She dwelt in Jerusalem in the Second Quarter.) And they spoke to her to that *effect*.

Then she answered them, "Thus says the LORD

God of Israel, 'Tell the man who sent you to Me,

"Thus says the LORD: 'Behold, I will bring calamity on this place and on its inhabitants, all the curses that are written in the book which they have read before the king of Judah, because they have forsaken Me and burned incense to other gods, that they might provoke Me to anger with all the works of their hands. Therefore My wrath will be poured out on this place, and not be quenched.' " ' But as for the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of the LORD, in this manner you shall speak to him, 'Thus says the LORD God of Israel: "*Concerning* the words which you have heard; because your heart was tender, and you humbled yourself before God when you heard His words against this place and against its inhabitants, and you humbled yourself before Me, and you tore your clothes and wept before Me, I also have heard *you*," says the LORD. Surely I will gather you to your fathers, and you shall be gathered to your grave in peace; and your eyes shall not see all the calamity which I will bring on this place and its inhabitants." ' " So they brought back word to the king.

a. **Huldah the prophetess:** We know little of this woman other than this mention here (and the similar account recorded in 2Ki. 22:14). With the apparent approval of King Josiah, Hilkiah the priest consulted this woman for spiritual guidance. It wasn't because of her own wisdom and spirituality, but that she was recognized as a **prophetess** and could reveal the heart and mind of God.

i. There were certainly other prophets in

Judah. "Though the contemporary prophet Jeremiah is not mentioned, he commended Josiah (Jer. 22:15-16) and the prophet Zephaniah (1:1) was at work in this reign." (Wiseman) Yet for some reason - perhaps spiritual, perhaps practical - they chose to consult **Huldah the prophetess.**

ii. "We find from this, and we have many facts in all ages to corroborate it, that a pontiff, a pope, a bishop, or a priest, may, in some cases, not possess the true knowledge of God; and that a simple *woman*, possessing the life of God in her soul, may have more knowledge of the divine testimonies than many of those whose office it is to explain and enforce them." (Clarke) b. **I will bring calamity on this place and on its inhabitants:** Josiah knew that Judah deserved judgment, and that judgment would indeed come. Judah and its leaders had walked against the LORD for too long, and would not genuinely repent so as to avoid eventual judgment.

c. **All the curses that are written in the book:** God's word was true, even in its promises of judgment. God's faithfulness is demonstrated as much by His judgment upon the wicked as it is by His mercy upon the repentant.

i. "Josiah went on with the work of reformation, even when he knew that nationally it was foredoomed to failure. . . .

She distinctly told him that there would be no true repentance on the part of the people, and therefore that judgment was inevitable. It was *then* that the heroic strength of Josiah manifested itself, in that he went on with his work. . . . No pathway of service is more difficult than that of bearing witness to God, in word and in work, in the midst of conditions which are

unresponsive." (Morgan)

d. **Because your heart was tender:** Josiah's heart was tender in two ways. First, it was **tender** to the word of God and was able to receive the convicting voice of the Holy Spirit.

Second, it was **tender** to the message of judgment from Huldah in the previous verses.

i. **You humbled yourself before God**

**when you heard His words:** "Have you ever noticed the difference between being

humble and being humbled? Many persons are humbled who are not humble at all. . . .

It is a voluntary humiliation of soul which is inculcated by the example of Josiah, and

may the Spirit of God make us willing in the day of his power, that we may willingly

humble ourselves before God." (Spurgeon) e. **You shall be**

**gathered to your grave in peace:** Though Josiah died in battle, there are at least three ways that this was true.

- He died before the great spiritual disaster and exile came to Judah.

- He was gathered to the spirits of his fathers, who were in peace.

- He died in God's favor, though by the hand of an enemy.

i. "Though Josiah died in violent

circumstances (2Ch. 35:20-24), this does not invalidate God's promise which really means that the exile would not take place during Josiah's lifetime." (Selman)

f. **Your eyes shall not see all the calamity which I will bring on this place:** This was God's mercy to Josiah. His own godliness and tender heart could not stop the eventual judgment of God, but it could delay it.

Inevitable judgment is sometimes delayed

because of the tender hearts of the people of God.

i. God delayed judgment even in the case of Ahab, who responded to a word of warning

with a kind of repentance (1Ki. 21:25-29).

B. The honest repentance of King Josiah and the people of Judah.

1. (29-30) Josiah reads the Word of God to the leaders of Judah.

Then the king sent and gathered all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem. The king went up to the house of the LORD, with all the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem; the priests and the Levites, and all the people, great and small. And he read in their hearing all the words of the Book of the Covenant which had been found in the house of the LORD.

a. **The king sent and gathered all the elders of Judah:** Josiah heard the promise of both eventual judgment and the immediate delay of judgment. He did not respond with indifference or simple contentment that he would not see the judgment in his day. He wanted to get the kingdom right with God, and he knew that he could not do it all by himself - he needed **all the elders of Judah** to join in broken repentance with him.

b. **And he read in their hearing all the words of the Book:** The king did this himself.

He was so concerned that the nation would hear the word of God that **he read** it to them himself.

i. "It is especially interesting that he regards the written form of God's word as superior to inherited tradition and is willing to pay the cost of correcting his priorities." (Selman) 2. (31-33) The covenant is renewed.

Then the king stood in his place and made a covenant before the LORD, to follow the LORD, and to keep His commandments and His testimonies and His statutes with all his heart and all his soul, to perform the words of the covenant that were written in this book. And he made all who were present in Jerusalem and Benjamin take a stand.

So the inhabitants of Jerusalem did according to the covenant of God, the God of their fathers. Thus Josiah removed all the abominations from all the country that *belonged* to the children of Israel, and made all who were present in Israel diligently serve the LORD their God. All his days they did not depart from following the LORD God of their fathers.

a. **The king stood in his place and made a covenant before the LORD, to follow the LORD:** King Josiah stood before the people and publicly declared his commitment to obey the word of God to the very best of his ability (**with all his heart and all his soul**).

i. " *[He] made a covenant* is literally '[he] cut a covenant,' which goes back to the practice of cutting the carcass of an animal and separating the parts so the contracting parties could seal their agreement by walking between them (cf. Gen. 15:17; Jer. 34:18)." (Dilday)

b. **And he made all who were present . . .**

**take a stand:** It wasn't enough for the king himself to do it and to offer his example to the people. They had to *follow* by taking a **stand** for the covenant themselves. This showed that the work of God's Spirit went beyond the king and the leaders and extended to the people also.

i. "It is likely that he caused them all to *arise* when he read the terms of the covenant, and thus testify their approbation of the

covenant itself, and their resolution to observe it faithfully and perseveringly." (Clarke)

ii. "The ceremony compares with the basic Mizpah covenant (1Sa. 8:11-17; 10:25) and the renewal of the covenant at Shechem (Joshua 24), both of which marked turning points in Jewish history." (Wiseman)

**c. All his days they did not depart from following the LORD God of their fathers:** The work of King Josiah had a lasting effect among the people of Judah. They stayed faithful to God during his reign.

*© 2006 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without permission* **2** He did what the LORD approved and followed in his ancestor David's footsteps; he did not deviate to the right or the left.

**3** In the eighth year of his reign, while he was still young, he began to seek the God of his ancestor David. In his twelfth year he began ridding Judah and Jerusalem of the high places, Asherah poles, idols, and images. **4** He ordered the altars of the Baals to be torn down, and broke the incense altars that were above them. He smashed the Asherah poles, idols and images, crushed them up and sprinkled the dust over the tombs of those who had sacrificed to them. **5** He burned the bones of the pagan priests on their altars; he purified Judah and Jerusalem. **6**

In the cities of Manasseh, Ephraim, and Simeon, as far as Naphtali, and in the ruins around them, **7** he tore down the altars and Asherah poles, demolished the idols, and smashed all the incense altars throughout the land of Israel. Then he returned to Jerusalem.

**8** In the eighteenth year of his reign, he continued his policy of purifying the land and the temple. He sent Shaphan son of Azaliah, Maaseiah the city official, and Joah son of Joahaz the secretary to repair the temple of the LORD his God. **9** They went to Hilkiah the high priest and gave him the silver that had been brought to God's temple. The Levites who guarded the door had collected it from the people of Manasseh and Ephraim and from all who were left in Israel, as well as from all the people of Judah and Benjamin and the residents of Jerusalem. **10**

They handed it over to the construction foremen assigned to the LORD's temple. They in turn paid the temple workers to restore and repair it. **11** They gave money to the craftsmen

and builders to buy chiseled stone and wood for the braces and rafters of the buildings that the kings of Judah had allowed to fall into disrepair. **12** The men worked faithfully. Their supervisors were Jahath and Obadiah (Levites descended from Merari), as well as Zechariah and Meshullam (descendants of Kohath). The Levites, all of whom were skilled musicians, **13** supervised the laborers and all the foremen on their various jobs.

Some of the Levites were scribes, officials, and guards.

**14** When they took out the silver that had been brought to the LORD's temple, Hilkiah the priest found the law scroll the LORD had given to Moses. **15** Hilkiah informed Shaphan the scribe, "I found the law scroll in the LORD's temple." Hilkiah gave the scroll to Shaphan. **16** Shaphan brought the scroll to the king and reported, "Your servants are doing everything assigned to them. **17** They melted down the silver in the LORD's temple and handed it over to the supervisors of the construction foremen." **18** Then Shaphan the scribe told the king, "Hilkiah the priest has given me a scroll." Shaphan read it out loud before the king. **19** When the king heard the words of the law scroll, he tore his clothes. **20** The king ordered Hilkiah, Ahikam son of Shaphan, Abdon son of Micah, Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah the king's servant, **21** "Go, seek an oracle from the LORD for me and those who remain in Israel and Judah. Find out about the words of this scroll that has been discovered. For the LORD's fury has been ignited against us, because our ancestors have not obeyed the word of the LORD by doing all that this scroll instructs!"

**22** So Hilkiah and the others sent by the king went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum son of Tokhath, the son of Hasrah, the supervisor of the wardrobe. (She lived in Jerusalem in the Mishneh district.) They stated their business, **23** and she said to them: "This is what the LORD God of Israel says: 'Say this to the man who sent you to me: **24** "This is what the LORD says: 'I am about to bring disaster

on this place and its residents, the details of which are recorded in the scroll which they read before the king of Judah. **25** This will happen because they have abandoned me and offered sacrifices to other gods, angering me with all the idols they have made. My anger will ignite against this place and will not be extinguished!” **26** Say this to the king of Judah, who sent you to seek an oracle from the LORD: “This is what the LORD God of Israel says concerning the words you have heard: **27** ‘You displayed a sensitive spirit and humbled yourself before God when you heard his words concerning this place and its residents. You humbled yourself before me, tore your clothes and wept before me, and I have heard you,’ says the LORD. **28** ‘Therefore I will allow you to die and be buried in peace. You will not have to witness all the disaster I will bring on this place and its residents.’”” Then they reported back to the king.

**29** The king summoned all the leaders of Judah and Jerusalem. **30** The king went up to the LORD’s temple, accompanied by all the people of Judah, the residents of Jerusalem, the priests, and the Levites. All the people were there, from the oldest to the youngest. He read aloud all the words of the scroll of the covenant that had been discovered in the LORD’s temple. **31** The king stood by his pillar and renewed the covenant before the LORD, agreeing to follow the LORD and to obey his commandments, laws, and rules with all his heart and being, by carrying out the terms of this covenant recorded on this scroll. **32** He made all who were in Jerusalem and Benjamin agree to it. The residents of Jerusalem acted in accordance with the covenant of God, the God of their ancestors. **33** Josiah removed all the detestable idols from all the areas belonging to the Israelites and encouraged all who were in Israel to worship the LORD their God.

Throughout the rest of his reign they did not turn aside from following the LORD God of their ancestors.

**1** Josiah observed a Passover festival for the LORD in Jerusalem. They slaughtered the Passover lambs on the fourteenth day of the first month.

Guzik - 2 Chronicles 35:1-27

## **2 Chronicles 35 - Josiah's Passover**

A. Josiah's great Passover.

1. (1-6) Josiah directs the priests and the Levites for the Passover.

Now Josiah kept a Passover to the LORD in Jerusalem, and they slaughtered the Passover *lambs* on the fourteenth *day* of the first month.

And he set the priests in their duties and encouraged them for the service of the house of the LORD. Then he said to the Levites who taught all Israel, who were holy to the LORD:

"Put the holy ark in the house which Solomon the son of David, king of Israel, built. *It shall* no longer *be* a burden on *your* shoulders. Now serve the LORD your God and His people Israel.

Prepare *yourselves* according to your fathers' houses, according to your divisions, following the written instruction of David king of Israel and the written instruction of Solomon his son. And stand in the holy *place* according to the divisions of the fathers' houses of your brethren the *lay* people, and *according to* the division of the father's house of the Levites. So slaughter the Passover *offerings*, consecrate yourselves, and prepare *them* for your brethren, that *they* may do according to the word of the LORD by the hand of Moses."

a. **They slaughtered the Passover lambs on the fourteenth day of the first month:** The previous Passover of note was in the days of Hezekiah (2Ch. 30:1-3). That Passover had to be celebrated in the second month, but Josiah was able to keep this great Passover at the appointed time in the **first month** (Num. 9:1-5).

**b. He set the priests in their duties and encouraged them for service:** Josiah understood that it would take an enormous

amount of planning and work to properly

conduct this Passover. The priests needed to be both **set** and **encouraged** for this.

i. "The first thing is to get every man into his proper place; the next thing is for every man to have a good spirit in his present place, so as to occupy it worthily." (Spurgeon) c. **Put**

**the holy ark in the house which**

**Solomon the son of David, king of Israel, built:** Under Josiah's direction, Hilkiah the priest recently had found the copy of the Law of Moses in the temple. Now we learn that under the apostate administrations of the previous kings, Manasseh and Amon, apparently the **holy ark** had also been removed from the temple. Now, King Josiah directed that it be returned to its rightful place.

i. **It shall no longer be a burden on your shoulders** indicates that the ark was not at "rest" in the holy place of the temple. The time was long overdue to return it to its rest.

ii. "The Hebrews tell us, that the priests in those idolatrous times had carried the holy ark out of the temple - that it might not stand there among those heathenish idols -

and conveyed it to the house of Shallum,

who was uncle to the prophet Jeremiah, and

husband to the prophetess Huldah." (Trapp) d. **So**

**slaughter the Passover offerings:** One of the main features of the Passover was the sacrifice of a lamb for each household (Exo.

13:43-49). This meant a substantial amount of work for the priests.

2. (7-9) Lambs provided for the Passover sacrifice.

Then Josiah gave the *lay* people lambs and young goats from the flock, all for Passover *offerings* for all who were present, to the number of thirty thousand, as well as three thousand cattle; these *were* from the king's possessions.

And his leaders gave willingly to the people, to the priests, and to the Levites. Hilkiah, Zechariah, and Jehiel, rulers of the house of God, gave to the priests for the Passover *offerings* two thousand six hundred *from the flock*, and three hundred cattle. Also Conaniah, his brothers Shemaiah and Nethanel, and Hashabiah and Jeiel and Jozabad, chief of the Levites, gave to the Levites for Passover *offerings* five thousand *from the flock* and five hundred cattle.

**a. Josiah gave the lay people lambs and young goats from the flock:** This was staggering generosity on the part of King Josiah.

He provided **thirty thousand** lambs or goats for the Passover sacrifice, as well as **three thousand cattle**. It shows how passionate King Josiah was to have a proper Passover celebration, that he was willing to bear the expense.

i. "The total number of offerings is more than double that at Hezekiah's Passover (2Ch. 30:24), a further indication of the greater generosity and significance of this occasion." (Selman)

**b. And his leader gave willingly to the people:** As is often the custom, the generosity of the leader (King Josiah) prompted the generosity of others.

3. (10-14) The slaughter of the Passover lambs and the sacrificial meal.

So the service was prepared, and the priests stood in their places, and the Levites in their divisions, according to the king's command. And they slaughtered the Passover *offerings*; and the priests sprinkled *the blood* with their hands, while the Levites skinned *the animals*. Then they removed the burnt offerings that *they* might give them to the divisions of the fathers' houses of the *lay* people, to offer to the LORD, as *it is* written in the Book of Moses. And so *they did* with the cattle. Also they roasted the Passover *offerings* with fire according to the ordinance; but the *other*

holy *offerings* they boiled in pots, in caldrons, and in pans, and divided *them* quickly among all the *lay* people. Then afterward they prepared portions for themselves and for the priests, because the priests, the sons of Aaron, *were busy* in offering burnt offerings and fat until night; therefore the Levites prepared portions for themselves and for the priests, the sons of Aaron.

a. **So the service was prepared:** " *The service was arranged* is a rare but significant phrase occurring additionally in the Old Testament only at 2Ch. 8:16; 29:35, meaning that everything had been done as God required." (Selman)

b. **And they slaughtered the Passover offerings:** It seems that on this Passover the sacrifices were all directly made by the priests themselves. They did not allow the head of each household to perform the sacrifice individually.

i. "In contrast to Hezekiah's practice and the implications of the Pentateuchal law (Deu.

16:5-6; 2Ch. 30:17), the Levites slaughtered all the Passover lambs." (Selman)

ii. Clarke had a different suggestion: "The people themselves might slay their own

paschal lambs, and then present the blood

to the priests, that they might sprinkle it before the altar; and the Levites flayed

them, and made them ready for dressing."

c. **They roasted the Passover offerings**

**with fire according to ordinance:** This was the second aspect of the Passover celebration -

a festive meal enjoyed by the entire nation, household by household.

i. **They roasted the Passover offerings**

**with fire,** "To set forth Christ roasted for us in the fire of his Father's fierce

wrath." (Trapp)

ii. "While the flocks of sheep and goats provided for the paschal lambs, the cattle must have served for peace offerings, for feasting throughout the days of Unleavened Bread that followed the Passover." (Payne) d. **Then afterward they prepared portions for themselves and for the priests:** This was the correct order. First the people were served, and then the **priests** and the Levite leaders.

4. (15-19) The greatness of Josiah's Passover.

And the singers, the sons of Asaph, *were* in their places, according to the command of David, Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun the king's seer.

Also the gatekeepers were at each gate; they did not have to leave their position, because their brethren the Levites prepared portions for them.

So all the service of the LORD was prepared the same day, to keep the Passover and to offer burnt offerings on the altar of the LORD, according to the command of King Josiah. And the children of Israel who were present kept the Passover at that time, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread for seven days. There had

been no Passover kept in Israel like that since the days of Samuel the prophet; and none of the kings of Israel had kept such a Passover as Josiah kept, with the priests and the Levites, all Judah and Israel who were present, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. In the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah this Passover was kept.

a. **The singers, the sons of Asaph, were in their places:** There was nothing in the Law of Moses directing singing or a communal worship service at the celebration of Passover. Josiah therefore went beyond the commandment to make this an especially meaningful and memorable occasion.

b. **Also the gatekeepers were at each gate; they did not have to leave their position:** This shows that Josiah

was mindful of the security and the strength of the kingdom even during this great celebration. Every guard stayed ready and on duty, and **the Levites prepared portions** for the grateful **gatekeepers**.

c. **So all the service of the LORD was**

**prepared the same day**: Because of the remarkable planning, organization, and hard work of the king, the priests, and the Levites, this massive amount of sacrifice and festive meals were all **prepared the same day**. They did this not out of some strange compulsion, but in trying to be obedient to the command of Moses for the day on which to observe Passover (Num. 9:1-5).

d. **There had been no Passover kept in**

**Israel like that since the days of Samuel the prophet**:

This celebration of Passover was so significant that one had to go back *before* the time of David and Solomon to find a keeping of Passover that was so well organized and joyfully conducted.

i. This Passover was remarkable for several reasons.

- It was remarkable in the magnitude of its celebration, including even the remnant of the north came to celebrate it in Jerusalem. " 'All Judah and Israel' includes people from north and south, implying a larger attendance than at Hezekiah's Passover ( *cf.* 2Ch. 30:25)." (Selman)

- It was remarkable in its strict obedience to the Law of Moses

- It was remarkable in the way it shined amidst these dark years in Judah's history.

ii. "No, not Hezekiah; for at his passover the congregation was not so great, nor so well prepared; nor were the Levites and singers so well marshaled, nor the sacrifices so

many." (Trapp)

iii. "Josiah's passover was so vast and rare a success because of the large amount of previous preparation, as is described in this chapter." (Meyer)

B. The death of King Josiah.

1. (20-22) Josiah disregards God's warning and goes to war. After all this, when Josiah had prepared the temple, Necho king of Egypt came up to fight against Carchemish by the Euphrates; and Josiah went out against him. But he sent messengers to him, saying, "What have I to do with you, king of Judah? *I have not come* against you this day, but against the house with which I have war; for God commanded me to make haste. Refrain *from meddling with* God, who *is* with me, lest He destroy you." Nevertheless Josiah would not turn his face from him, but disguised himself so that he might fight with him, and did not heed the words of Necho from the mouth of God. So he came to fight in the Valley of Megiddo.

a. **Necho king of Egypt came up to fight**

**against Carchemish:** This was part of the geopolitical struggle between the declining Assyrian Empire and the emerging Babylonian Empire. The Assyrians made an alliance with the Egyptians to protect against the growing power of the Babylonians.

b. **King Josiah went against him:** Sadly, Josiah disregarded what was actually good counsel from Necho when he said **What have I to do with you, king of Judah? I have not come against you this day.** Josiah stubbornly refused to hear this warning (which was actually from God).

i. Josiah was in sin because his attack against Egypt was in support of the Assyrian Empire, and he had no business supporting the Assyrian Empire. "The only reason for doing so must have been some supposed

political advantage. Against that kind of action the prophets were constantly warning the kings. A word claiming to be from God, forbidding what was already forbidden, had a weight of moral appeal almost amounting to certainty." (Morgan)

ii. Interestingly, Necho himself said, "**for God has commanded me to make haste. Refrain from meddling with God,**

**who is with me, lest He destroy you.**" It is unlikely that Necho understood and meant that he was in fact an agent of the God of Israel; he probably said and understood this in terms of his own gods and his own incorrect understanding of God.

Nevertheless, it was an unknowing divine prophecy, much as the words of Caiaphas regarding the death of Jesus (Joh. 11:49-52).

iii. "Yet, methinks, he ought so far to have regarded it, as to have inquired the mind of God about it; which he neglected to do, and therefore he cannot be wholly excused, and is here taxed for it." (Poole)

iv. "How Josiah was supposed to recognize God's guidance is not specified, though

sanctified common sense would have been a

perfectly adequate response." (Selman) v. "Such a story must, to say the least, give us pause, and make us enquire as to how far we are ever justified in refusing to

consider a word which is claimed as a divine message, even when it comes from sources

from which we should least expect to receive it." (Morgan)

c. **Nevertheless Josiah would not turn his face from them:** Josiah thought he could escape the prediction of Necho by disguising himself in battle - yet he was still shot by archers and died. This was a sad end to one of the great kings of Judah.

i. "It was not of faith, else why 'disguise' himself? There is no record of any prayer before the battle, as in the case of so many of his godly ancestors; and this rash act of Josiah seems unaccountable." (Knapp) ii. "The exact place of the battle seems to have been *Hadadrimmon*, in the valley of Megiddo, for there Zechariah tells us, chapter 12:11, was the great mourning for

Josiah." (Clarke)

iii. "The reality of the contest at 'Megiddo' has received archaeological confirmation from the ruins of the site's Stratum II." (Payne)

## 2. (23-25) Josiah's death and burial

And the archers shot King Josiah; and the king said to his servants, "Take me away, for I am severely wounded." His servants therefore took him out of that chariot and put him in the second chariot that he had, and they brought him to Jerusalem. So he died, and was buried in *one of* the tombs of his fathers. And all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah. Jeremiah also lamented for Josiah. And to this day all the singing men and the singing women speak of Josiah in their lamentations. They made it a custom in Israel; and indeed they *are* written in the Laments.

a. **And the archers shot King Josiah:** Though he was disguised, he was still wounded and killed. We can admire the bravery of Josiah, but not his stubborn insistence on disregarding the warnings from God and going into battle.

i. "He repented at his death, no doubt, of his rashness." (Trapp)

ii. "The manner of Josiah's demise is also interpreted ironically by being paralleled with Ahab's demise ( *cf.* 2Ch. 18:29-34). The links are quite explicit, for each king *disguised himself*, *archers* delivered the fatal blow, and each king admitted *I am wounded*, and was propped up in a *chariot* before he died. The ultimate irony is that despite

Josiah's previous record, he died in the same way as someone who was known to 'hate the LORD' (2Ch. 19:2)." (Selman)

**b. And to this day all the singing men and the singing women speak of Josiah in their lamentations:** Zec. 12:11 tells us a bit of this great mourning, using it as a comparison to the great mourning that will come upon the Jewish people when they turn to their once-rejected Messiah: *In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning at Hadad Rimmon in the plain of Megiddo.*

i. "These dirges are then said to be 'written in the Laments' - a book that is no longer extant and which is not to be confused with the prophet's later laments over Josiah's sons (Jer. 22:10, 20-30) or over Jerusalem's fall (Lamentations)." (Payne)

ii. "Far from being embarrassed by Huldah's prophecy, therefore, the Chronicler is at pains to stress that God kept his promises about Josiah's peaceful burial and the exile's continuing delay despite Josiah's stupidity and violent death." (Selman) 3. (26-27) The summary of the reign of good King Josiah.

Now the rest of the acts of Josiah and his goodness, according to *what was* written in the Law of the LORD, and his deeds from first to last, indeed they *are* written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah.

**a. The rest of the acts of Josiah and his goodness:** It seems that Josiah's reign was remembered with special fondness; perhaps because he ended up being the *last* good king of Judah.

i. Yet, the people of the kingdom turned against God very quickly after the reign of Josiah. "Josiah had evidently made himself greatly beloved by them, and the probability is that the reforms he instituted were based on that love rather than on the people's real return to

devotion to God." (Morgan) ii. "Even so, Josiah's passing removed the last obstacle to the coming catastrophe." (Selman)

b. **According to what was written the Law of the LORD:** This is what made Josiah such a good king and a good man. He had a great interest in and obedience to **what was written in the Law of the LORD.**

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**2** He appointed the priests to fulfill their duties and encouraged them to carry out their service in the LORD's temple. **3** He told the Levites, who instructed all Israel about things consecrated to the LORD, "Place the holy ark in the temple which King Solomon son of David of Israel built. Don't carry it on your shoulders. Now serve the LORD your God and his people Israel! **4** Prepare yourselves by your families according to your divisions, as instructed by King David of Israel and his son Solomon. **5**

Stand in the sanctuary and, together with the Levites, represent the family divisions of your countrymen. **6**

Slaughter the Passover lambs, consecrate yourselves, and make preparations for your countrymen to do what the LORD commanded through Moses."

**7** From his own royal flocks and herds, Josiah supplied the people with 30,000 lambs and goats for the Passover sacrifice, as well as 3,000 cattle. **8** His officials also willingly contributed to the people, priests, and Levites.

Hilkiah, Zechariah, and Jehiel, the leaders of God's temple, supplied 2,600 Passover sacrifices and 300 cattle. **9**

Konaniah and his brothers Shemaiah and Nethanel, along with Hashabiah, Jeiel, and Jozabad, the officials of the Levites, supplied the Levites with 5,000 Passover sacrifices and 500 cattle. **10** Preparations were made, and the priests stood at their posts and the Levites in their divisions as prescribed by the king. **11** They slaughtered the Passover lambs and the priests splashed the blood, while the Levites skinned the animals. **12** They reserved the burnt offerings

and the cattle for the family divisions of the people to present to the LORD, as prescribed in the scroll of Moses. **13** They cooked the Passover sacrifices over the open fire as prescribed and cooked the consecrated offerings in pots, kettles, and pans. They quickly served them to all the people. **14** Afterward they made preparations for themselves and for the priests, because the priests, the descendants of Aaron, were offering burnt sacrifices and fat portions until evening. The Levites made preparations for themselves and for the priests, the descendants of Aaron. **15** The musicians, the descendants of Asaph, manned their posts, as prescribed by David, Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun the king's prophet. The guards at the various gates did not need to leave their posts, for their fellow Levites made preparations for them. **16** So all the preparations for the LORD's service were made that day, as the Passover was observed and the burnt sacrifices were offered on the altar of the LORD, as prescribed by King Josiah. **17** So the Israelites who were present observed the Passover at that time, as well as the Feast of Unleavened Bread for seven days. **18** A Passover like this had not been observed in Israel since the days of Samuel the prophet. None of the kings of Israel had observed a Passover like the one celebrated by Josiah, the priests, the Levites, all the people of Judah and Israel who were there, and the residents of Jerusalem. **19** This Passover was observed in the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign. **20** After Josiah had done all this for the temple, King Necho of Egypt marched up to do battle at Carchemish on the Euphrates River. Josiah marched out to oppose him. **21** Necho sent messengers to him, saying, "Why are you opposing me, O king of Judah? I am not attacking you today, but the kingdom with which I am at war. God told me to hurry. Stop opposing God, who is with me, or else he will destroy you." **22** But Josiah did not turn back from him; he disguised himself for battle. He did not take seriously the

words of Necho which he had received from God; he went to fight him in the Plain of Megiddo. **23**

Archers shot King Josiah; the king ordered his servants, "Take me out of this chariot, for I am seriously wounded."

**24** So his servants took him out of the chariot, put him in another chariot that he owned, and brought him to Jerusalem, where he died. He was buried in the tombs of his ancestors; all the people of Judah and Jerusalem mourned Josiah. **25** Jeremiah composed laments for Josiah which all the male and female singers use to mourn Josiah to this very day. It has become customary in Israel to sing these; they are recorded in the Book of Laments.

**26** The rest of the events of Josiah's reign, including the faithful acts he did in obedience to what is written in the law of the LORD **27** and his accomplishments, from start to finish, are recorded in the Scroll of the Kings of Israel and Judah.

**1** The people of the land took Jehoahaz son of Josiah and made him king in his father's place in Jerusalem.

Guzik - 2 Chronicles 36:1-23

### ***2 Chronicles 36 - The Fall of Jerusalem***

A. The last four kings of Judah.

1. (1-4) The short reign of King Jehoahaz.

Then the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, and made him king in his father's place in Jerusalem. Jehoahaz *was* twenty-three years old when he became king, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. Now the king of Egypt deposed him at Jerusalem; and he imposed on the land a tribute of one hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold. Then the king of Egypt made *Jehoahaz's* brother Eliakim king over Judah and Jerusalem, and changed his name to Jehoiakim. And Necho took Jehoahaz his brother and carried him off to Egypt.

a. **And the people of the land took**

**Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, anointed him, and made him king in his father's place:** "The regular succession to

the throne of Judah ceased with the lamented Josiah. Jehoahaz was not the eldest son of the late king. Johanan and Jehoiakim were both older than he (1Ch. 3:15).

He was made king by popular choice: it was the preference of the multitude, not the appointment of God." (Knapp)

i. "It seems that after Necho had discomfited Josiah, he proceeded immediately against Charchemish, and in the interim, Josiah dying of his wounds, the people made his son king." (Clarke)

ii. "His name is omitted from among those of our Lord's ancestors in Matthew 1. . . .

which may imply that God did not recognize Jehoahaz, the people's choice, as being in a true sense the successor." (Knapp)

iii. 2Ki. 23:32 tells us, *he did evil in the sight of the LORD*. The reforms of King Josiah were wonderful, but they were not a long-lasting revival. His own son Jehoahaz did not follow in his godly ways.

iv. " *Jehoahaz* ('Yahweh has seized') was probably a throne name, for his personal name as Shallum (Jer. 22:11; 1Ch. 3:15).

The practice of primogeniture was overridden in view of his older brother (Eliakim) showing anti-Egyptian tendencies." (Wiseman)

**b. Necho took Jehoahaz his brother and**

**carried him off to Egypt:** After the defeat of King Josiah in battle, Pharaoh was able to dominate Judah and make it effectively a vassal kingdom and a buffer against the growing

Babylonian Empire. He **imposed on the land a tribute** and put on the throne of Judah a puppet king, a brother of Jehoahaz (**Eliakim**, renamed **Jehoiakim**).

2. (5-8) The reign and captivity of Jehoiakim.

Jehoiakim *was* twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And he did evil in the sight of the LORD his God. Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against him, and bound him in bronze *fetters* to carry him off to Babylon.

Nebuchadnezzar also carried off *some* of the articles from the house of the LORD to Babylon, and put them in his temple at Babylon. Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, the abominations which he did, and what was found against him, indeed they *are* written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah. Then Jehoiachin his son reigned in his place.

**a. Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old**

**when he became king:** Jehoiakim was nothing more than a puppet king presiding over a vassal kingdom under the Egyptians. He imposed heavy taxes on the people and paid the money to the Egyptians, as required (2Ki. 23:35).

i. "Nechoh had placed him there as a viceroy, simply to *raise* and *collect his taxes*." (Clarke) ii. "Yet at the same time Jehoiakim was wasting resources on the construction of a new palace by forced labour (Jer. 22:13-19)." (Wiseman)

**b. He did evil in the sight of the LORD:** Jehoiakim, like his brother Jehoahaz, did not follow the godly example of his father Josiah.

i. Jer. 36:22-24 describes the great ungodliness of Jehoiakim - how he even burned a scroll of God's word. In response to this, Jeremiah received this message from God: *And you shall say to Jehoiakim king of Judah, "Thus says the LORD: 'You have burned this scroll, saying, "Why have you written in it that the king of Babylon will certainly come and destroy this land, and cause man and beast to cease from here?"'"*

*Therefore thus says the LORD concerning Jehoiakim king of Judah: 'He shall have no one to sit on the throne of David, and his dead body shall be cast out to the heat of the day and the frost of the night.'"* (Jer.

36:29-30)

ii. "To all his former evils he added this, that he slew Urijah the prophet (Jer. 26:20, 23)." (Trapp)

**c. Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came**

**up:** Nebuchadnezzar, king of the Babylonian Empire, was concerned with Judah because of its strategic position in relation to the empires of Egypt and Assyria. Therefore it was important to him to conquer Judah and make it a subject kingdom (**his vassal**), securely loyal to Babylon.

i. Nebuchadnezzar came against Jerusalem because the Pharaoh of Egypt invaded Babylon. In response the young prince Nebuchadnezzar defeated the Egyptians at Charchemish, and then he pursued their fleeing army all the way down to the Sinai. Along the way (or on the way back), he subdued Jerusalem, who had been loyal to the Pharaoh of Egypt.

ii. This happened in 605 B.C. and it was the first (but not the last) encounter between Nebuchadnezzar and Jehoiakim. There would be two later invasions (597 and 587 B.C.).

iii. This specific attack is documented by the Babylonian Chronicles, a collection of tablets discovered as early as 1887, held in the British Museum. In them, Nebuchadnezzar's 605 B.C. presence in Judah is documented and clarified. When the Babylonian chronicles were finally published in 1956,

they gave us first-rate, detailed political and military information about the first 10 years of Nebuchadnezzar's reign. L.W. King prepared these tablets in 1919; he then died, and they were neglected for four decades.

iv. Excavations also document the victory of Nebuchadnezzar over the Egyptians at Carchemish in May or June of 605 B.C.

Archaeologists found evidences of battle, vast quantities of arrowheads, layers of ash, and a shield of a Greek mercenary fighting for the Egyptians.

v. This campaign of Nebuchadnezzar was interrupted suddenly when he heard of his father's death and raced back to Babylon to secure his succession to the throne. He traveled about 500 miles in two weeks - remarkable speed for travel in that day. Nebuchadnezzar only had the time to take a few choice captives (such as Daniel), a few treasures and a promise of submission from Jehoiakim.

d. **Bound him in bronze fetters to carry**

**him off to Babylon:** According to 2Ki. 24:1-7

this happened because Jehoiakim rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar. God did not bless this rebellion because though Jehoiakim was a patriot of the kingdom of Judah, but not a man submitted to God. These sins were among those things that were **found against him**.

i. 2Ch. 36:6 tells us that Nebuchadnezzar intended to take Jehoiakim to Babylon, bound in bronze fetters. Yet Jer. 22:19 tells us that he would be disgracefully buried outside of Jerusalem.

ii. "The closing formulae make no reference to the burial of Jehoiakim, whose death

occurred about December 598 before the first capture of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. 2Ch. 36:7 implies that he was taken to Babylon, but Jer. 22:19 tells how he was thrown unmourned outside Jerusalem, perhaps by a pro-Babylonian group who gave him the unceremonial burial of 'an ass'." (Wiseman)

iii. "2Ch. 36:6 states that Nebuchadnezzar 'bound him in fetters, to carry him to Babylon.' It does not say he *was* taken there. He may have been released after promising subjection to his conqueror." (Knapp)

3. (9-10) The reign of Jehoiachin and his recall to Babylon. Jehoiachin *was* eight years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months and ten days. And he did evil in the sight of the LORD. At the turn of the year King Nebuchadnezzar summoned *him* and took him to Babylon, with the costly articles from the house of the LORD, and made Zedekiah, *Jehoiakim's* brother, king over Judah and Jerusalem.

a. **Jehoiachin was eight years old when he became king:** 2Ki. 24:8 tells us that *Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he became king*.

The difference between these two accounts is probably due to the error of a copyist in Chronicles.

i. "2Ch. 36:9 makes him eight years old at the beginning of his reign . . . But some Hebrew MSS., Syriac, and Arabic, read 'eighteen' in Chronicles' so 'eight' must be an error of transcription." (Knapp)

ii. Jehoiachin "Was probably the throne-name of Jeconiah, abbreviated also to Coniah." (Wiseman)

b. **And he did evil in the sight of the LORD:** He carried on in the tradition of the wicked kings of Judah.

i. "Jeremiah said of Jehoiakim, (Jehoiachin's father) 'He shall have none to sit upon the throne of David' (Jer. 26:30). The word 'sit'

here means to ' *firmly* sit,' or 'dwell'; and Jehoiachin's short three months' reign was not that surely. And Zedekiah, Jehoiachin's successor, was Jehoiakim's *brother*, not his son."

(Knapp) ii. "That he was a grievous offender against God, we learn from Jer. 22:24, which the

reader may consult; and in the man's punishment, see his crimes." (Clarke)

c. **King Nebuchadnezzar summoned him**

**and took him to Babylon:** The previous king of Judah (Jehoiakim) led a rebellion against Nebuchadnezzar. Now the king of Babylon came with his armies against Jerusalem, and Jehoiachin hoped to appease Nebuchadnezzar

by submitting himself, his family, and his

leaders to the Babylonian king. God allowed Jehoiachin to be taken as a bound captive back to Babylon.

i. "His presence in Babylon is attested by tablets listing oil and barley supplies to him, his family and five sons in 592-569 B.C. and naming him as 'Yaukin king of the Judeans.'"

(Wiseman)

d. **With costly articles from the house of the LORD:**

On this second attack against Jerusalem, Nebuchadnezzar took whatever valuables remained in the temple or in the royal palaces of Jerusalem.

i. "The fall of Jerusalem didn't come about in one cataclysmic battle; it occurred in stages." (Dilday)

Nebuchadnezzar's initial subjugation of the city about 605 B.C.

.

Destruction from Nebuchadnezzar's  
marauding bands, 601 to 598 B.C.

.

The siege and fall of Jerusalem under  
Nebuchadnezzar's main army on 16 March,  
597 B.C.

.

Nebuchadnezzar returns to completely  
destroy and depopulate Jerusalem in the  
summer of 586 B.C.

4. (11-14) The reign of Zedekiah and his rebellion against  
Babylon.

Zedekiah *was* twenty-one years old when he became king,  
and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. He did evil in the  
sight of the LORD

his God, *and* did not humble himself before Jeremiah the  
prophet, *who spoke* from the mouth of the LORD. And he  
also rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar, who had made  
him swear *an oath* by God; but he stiffened his neck and  
hardened his heart against turning to the LORD

God of Israel. Moreover all the leaders of the priests and the  
people transgressed more and more, *according* to all the  
abominations of the nations, and defiled the house of the  
LORD which He had consecrated in Jerusalem.

a. **Zedekiah was twenty-one years old  
when he became king:** Since

Nebuchadnezzar had completely humbled  
Judah, he put a king on the throne whom he  
thought would submit to Babylon. He chose this uncle of  
Jehoiachin, who was also a brother to Jehoiakim.

i. "This king (597-587 B.C.) inherited a much reduced Judah, for the Negeb was lost (Jer.

13:18-19) and the land weakened by the loss of its experienced personnel. There were both a pro-Egyptian element and false prophets among the survivors (Jeremiah 28-29; 38:5)." (Wiseman)

ii. 2Ki. 24:17 tells us that the name of **Zedekiah** was originally *Mattaniah*. The name **Zedekiah** means, *The Lord is Righteous*. The righteous judgment of God would soon be seen against Judah.

b. **He did evil in the sight of the LORD**: His evil was especially shown in that he **did not humble himself before Jeremiah the prophet**. Instead of listening to Jeremiah or other messengers of God they instead mocked and disregarded the message.

i. "Zedekiah first disregarded Jeremiah's messages (Jer. 34:1-10); he came in time to direct his inquiries to this same prophet (Jeremiah 21); and he finally pled with him for help (Jeremiah 37). But at no point did he sincerely submit to the requirements of the Lord that Jeremiah transmitted to him." (Payne)

c. **He also rebelled against King**

**Nebuchadnezzar**: Jeremiah tells us that there were many false prophets in those days who preached a message of victory and triumph to Zedekiah, and he believed them instead of

Jeremiah and other godly prophets like him.

Therefore, he **rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar**.

i. For example, Jer. 32:1-5 tells us that Jeremiah clearly told Zedekiah that he would not succeed in his rebellion against Babylon.

Zedekiah arrested Jeremiah and imprisoned him for this, but the prophet steadfastly stayed faithful to the message God gave

him.

ii. "Through acts of infidelity toward his imperial master, he unwisely touched off the final revolt that brought down the vengeance of the Babylonians on Judah and Jerusalem; and thus both the state and the city were destroyed." (Payne)

d. **Moreover all the leaders of the priests and the people transgressed more and more:** These last kings of Judah were all wicked and deserving of judgment; but they

were not alone in their sin and rejection of God.

The **leaders**, the **priests**, and the **people** also **transgressed more and more**, pushing both God and Nebuchadnezzar to the limit.

B. The fall of Jerusalem and the Babylonian exile.

1. (15-17) The rejection of the message and the messengers. And the LORD God of their fathers sent *warnings* to them by His messengers, rising up early and sending *them*, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place. But they mocked the messengers of God, despised His words, and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against His people, till *there was* no remedy.

a. **The LORD God of their fathers sent**

**warnings to them:** God, great in mercy to His people, sent many warnings but these warning were rejected. The greatness of His **compassion** towards His people is shown by the expression **rising up early and sending them**.

i. "What a touching a graphic phrase! How did God yearn over that sinful and rebellious city! Like a man who has had a sleepless night of anxiety for his friend or child, and rises with the dawn to send a servant on a message of inquiry, or a message of love.

How eager is God for men's salvation." (Meyer)

b. **They mocked . . . despised . . . scoffed:** This tragic triple rejection of God's message and messengers sealed the

doom of Judah. They rejected the message until **there was no**

**remedy** and nothing could turn back the judgment of God.

i. "Three complaints are made in particular, that they were unfaithful, defiled the temple, and laughed at the prophets. All three are frequent themes throughout Chronicles, and it is as if the entire message of Chronicles were being summed up." (Selman)

ii. " *Till there was no remedy*; because the people would not repent, and God would not pardon them." (Poole)

iii. "Men's sins put thunderbolts into God's hands." (Trapp)

iv. "The cataclysm which has been threatened since Ahaz (2Ch. 28:9, 13, 25; 29:8, 10; 30:8) has been held back only because of the faith and repentance of individual leaders ( *cf.* 2Ch. 29:10; 30:8-9; 32:25-26; 33:6; 34:21, 25). Now there is *no remedy*, a chilling phrase meaning literally 'no healing'. It implies the cancellation of God's promise to heal his land and that therefore even prayer will be utterly useless." (Selman)

2. (18-19) Jerusalem is despoiled and given over to destruction.

Therefore He brought against them the king of the Chaldeans, who killed their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion on young man or virgin, on the aged or the weak; He gave *them* all into his hand. And all the articles from the house of God, great and small, the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king and of his leaders, all *these* he took to Babylon. Then they burned the house of God, broke down the wall of Jerusalem, burned all its palaces with fire, and destroyed all its precious possessions.

a. **He brought against them the king of the Chaldeans:** Having rejected the message and the messengers of His *compassion* (2Ch.

36:15), God turned Judah over to a leader and a people who had no **compassion** upon their people.

i. "The end comes remarkably swiftly, like a bird of prey suddenly swooping down after circling repeatedly over its victim. . . . The final collapse under Zedekiah is therefore merely the final stage in a process that has long been inevitable." (Selman)

b. **He gave them all into his hand . . . all the articles from the house of God . . . all its palaces . . . all its precious possession:** The emphasis is on the complete nature of the destruction the Babylonians brought to Jerusalem and its people. Nothing was spared and all was destroyed.

i. "The over-all impression is of unrelieved destruction. 'All, every' is used fivefold in verse 17-19, which together with *young and old, large and small*, and finally (literally), 'to destruction' confirms that there was no respite, no escape." (Selman)

c. **Then they burned the house of God:** This was the end of Solomon's great temple.

Solomon's great temple was now a ruin. It would stay a ruin for many years, until it was humbly rebuilt by the returning exiles in the days of Ezra.

i. "The Talmud declares that when the Babylonians entered the temple, they held a two-day feast there to desecrate it; then, on the third day, they set fire to the building.

The Talmud adds that the fire burned throughout that day and the next." (Dilday) ii. "Thus the temple was destroyed in the *eleventh* year of Zedekiah, the *nineteenth* of Nebuchadnezzar, the *first* of the XLVIIIth Olympiad, in the *one hundred and sixtieth* current year of the era of Nabonassar, *four hundred and twenty-four* years *three* months and *eight* days from the time in which Solomon laid its foundation stone." (Clarke)

d. **Broke down the wall of Jerusalem:** The walls of Jerusalem - the physical security of the city - were now destroyed. Jerusalem was no longer a place of safety and security. The walls would remain a ruin until they were rebuilt by the returning exiles in the days of Nehemiah.

i. "Thus, ends the history of a people the most fickle, the most ungrateful, and

perhaps on the whole the most sinful, that

ever existed on the face of the earth. But

what a display does all this give of the

power, justice, mercy, and long-suffering of the Lord! There was no people like this

people, and no God like their God." (Clarke) ii. "In the end,

the exile came not because Israel sinned, but because they spurned God's offers of reconciliation." (Selman) 3. (20-21)

The seventy-year Babylonian captivity.

And those who escaped from the sword he

carried away to Babylon, where they became

servants to him and his sons until the rule of the kingdom of Persia, to fulfill the word of the LORD

by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths. As long as she lay

desolate she kept Sabbath, to fulfill seventy years.

a. **Those who escaped from the sword he**

**carried away to Babylon:** This was the third major wave of captivity, taking the remaining people all except for the *poor of the land* (2Ki.

25:12).

i. "Of the prominent men of Jerusalem, only Jeremiah and Gedaliah were left behind (2Ki.

25:22; cf. Jerusalem 39:11-14). Jeremiah's

stand on the Babylonian issue was doubtless well-known." (Dilday)

b. **Where they become servants to him and his sons:**

One fulfillment of this was the taking of Daniel and his companions into captivity.

Daniel was one *of the king's descendants* taken into the palace of the king of Babylon (Dan. 1:1-4).

i. "The exiles came 'to Babylon' where 'they became servants'; and yet, after an initial period of discouragement (Psalm 137) and oppressive service (cf. Isa. 14:2-3), at least some Jews gained favor and status (2Ki.

25:27-30; Dan. 1:19; 2:49; 6:3)." (Payne) c. **Until the rule of the kingdom of Persia:** The Persians (together with the Medes) conquered the Babylonians in 539 B.C. and the Jewish people were only allowed to return to their native lands *after* the Persians came to power.

i. The ancient Greek historian Herodotus relates that the Persian King Cyrus conquered Babylon by diverting the flow of the Euphrates into a nearby swamp. This lowered the level of the river so his troops marched through the water and under the river-gates. They still would not have been able to enter *had not the bronze gates of the inner walls been left inexplicably unlocked*. This was exactly what God predicted in Isa. 44:28-45:7 and Jer. 51:57-58. *God opened the gates of the city of Babylon for Cyrus*, and put it in writing 200 years before it happened.

d. **To fulfill the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths:** God had commanded Israel to observe a Sabbath for the land,

allowing it to rest every seven years (Exo.

23:10-11). The people of Judah had denied the land its Sabbaths over a period of some 490

years, meaning that they "owed" the land 70

Sabbaths, and **to fulfill seventy years** God took the years back during the Babylonian exile.

i. This was promised to a disobedience Israel hundreds of years before: *Then the land shall enjoy its sabbaths as long as it lies desolate and you are in your enemies' land; then*

*the land shall rest and enjoy its sabbaths. As long as it lies desolate it shall rest; for the time it did not rest on your sabbaths when you dwelt in it.* (Lev. 26:34-35) ii. Jeremiah spoke of the 70 years of exile in two places: Jer. 25:11-13 and Jer. 29:10.

4. (22-23) Cyrus allows the Jewish people to return to Jerusalem.

Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also *put it* in writing, saying, Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth the LORD God of heaven has given me. And He has commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah. Who *is* among you of all His people? May the LORD his God *be* with him, and let him go up!

a. **Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia:** God gave the Persian king a sense of urgency about this, and the relief from exile was granted the very **first year** of his reign as **the LORD stirred up his spirit**.

i. Cyrus made a decree giving Ezra and the Babylonian captives the right to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple in 538 B.C. (Ezra 1:1-4 and Ezr. 5:13-17).

ii. "Cyrus's policy of cooperating with local religions and of encouraging the return of exiles has received explicit archaeological confirmation from the inscriptions of the king himself (cf. especially the famous 'Cyrus Cylinder')." (Payne)

b. **All the kingdoms of the earth the LORD God of heaven has given me:** This

remarkable recognition of God's hand upon his life may be connected with the remarkable prophecies regarding Cyrus in Isa. 44:28-45:4.

c. **He has commanded me to build Him a**

**house at Jerusalem:** The command of Cyrus not only allowed the return of the exiled people, but also a rebuilding of the destroyed temple.

i. " 'To build him a house' is a deliberate echo of the central promise of the Davidic covenant ( cf. 1Ch. 17:11-12; 22:10; 28:6; 2Ch. 6:9-10). Cyrus of course is thinking only of the house in *Jerusalem*, but in the Chronicler's thought this phrase is inevitably connected with both houses of the Davidic covenant, the dynasty as well as the temple." (Selman)

d. **Who is among you of all His people?**

**May the LORD his God be with him, and let him go up!** The Books of 1 and 2 Chronicles end with this wonderful and remarkable encouragement to return and rebuild Jerusalem.

This was the necessary and helpful encouragement to the first readers of Chronicles, letting them see their connection with God's broader plan of the ages.

i. Sadly, only a small percentage decided to return from exile; but those who did needed the encouragement to know they were making a valuable contribution to God's work.

ii. "Unlike the Book of Kings, with its central message of stern moral judgments, Chronicles exists essentially as a book of hope, grounded on the grace of our sovereign Lord. . . . [Chronicles shows that] History is a process, not of disintegration, but of sifting, of selection, and of development." (Payne)

iii. "In the end, therefore, the end is also a fresh start. God's promises continue through the exile, on through his own generation and into the future." (Selman) © 2006 David Guzik - No distribution beyond personal use without

*permission* **2** Jehoahaz was twenty-three years old when he became king, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. **3** The king of Egypt prevented him from ruling in Jerusalem and imposed on the land a special tax of one hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold. **4** The king of Egypt made Jehoahaz's brother Eliakim king over Judah and Jerusalem, and changed his name to Jehoiakim. Necho seized his brother Jehoahaz and took him to Egypt. **5** Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned for eleven years in Jerusalem. He did evil in the sight of the LORD his God. **6** King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon attacked him, bound him with bronze chains, and carried him away to Babylon. **7** Nebuchadnezzar took some of the items in the LORD's temple to Babylon and put them in his palace there.

**8** The rest of the events of Jehoiakim's reign, including the horrible sins he committed and his shortcomings, are recorded in the Scroll of the Kings of Israel and Judah. His son Jehoiachin replaced him as king.

**9** Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he became king, and he reigned three months and ten days in Jerusalem. He did evil in the sight of the LORD. **10** At the beginning of the year King Nebuchadnezzar ordered him to be brought to Babylon, along with the valuable items in the LORD's temple. In his place he made his relative Zedekiah king over Judah and Jerusalem.

**11** Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he ruled for eleven years in Jerusalem. **12** He did evil in the sight of the LORD his God. He did not humble himself before Jeremiah the prophet, the LORD's spokesman.

**13** He also rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him vow allegiance in the name of God. He was stubborn and obstinate, and refused to return to the LORD God of Israel. **14** All the leaders of the priests and people became more unfaithful and committed the same horrible sins practiced by the nations.

They defiled the LORD's temple which he had consecrated in Jerusalem.

**15** The LORD God of their ancestors continually warned them through his messengers, for he felt compassion for his people and his dwelling place. **16** But they mocked God's messengers, despised his warnings, and ridiculed his prophets. Finally the LORD got very angry at his people and there was no one who could prevent his judgment. **17**

He brought against them the king of the Babylonians, who slaughtered their young men in their temple. He did not spare young men or women, or even the old and aging.

God handed everyone over to him. **18** He carried away to Babylon all the items in God's temple, whether large or small, as well as what was in the treasuries of the LORD's temple and in the treasuries of the king and his officials.

**19** They burned down the LORD's temple and tore down the wall of Jerusalem. They burned all its fortified buildings and destroyed all its valuable items. **20** He deported to Babylon all who escaped the sword. They served him and his sons until the Persian kingdom rose to power. **21** This took place to fulfill the LORD's message delivered through Jeremiah. The land experienced its sabbatical years; it remained desolate for seventy years, as prophesied.

**22** In the first year of the reign of King Cyrus of Persia, in fulfillment of the promise he delivered through Jeremiah, the LORD moved King Cyrus of Persia to issue a written decree throughout his kingdom. **23** It read: "This is what King Cyrus of Persia says: 'The LORD God of the heavens has given to me all the kingdoms of the earth. He has appointed me to build for him a temple in Jerusalem in Judah. May the LORD your God energize you who belong to his people, so you may be able to go back there!'"